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'CAN THERE BE A CHURCH WITHOUT A BISHOP?'

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CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN

REV. DRS. WAINWRIGHT AND POTTS,

(THE FORMER OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL, THE LATTER
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,)

(GROWING OUT OF THE INCIDENTAL ASSERTION OF THE FORMER THAT

'THERE CANNOT BE A CHURCH WITHOUT A BISHOP.'

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS,

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE occasion of the following Correspondence was a remark made by Hon. RUFUS CHOATE in his Address before the New-England Society, at their Anniversary in New-York, in the month of December, 1843. In referring to the Puritans of New-England and their flight from foreign oppression, he said they "found an asylum (here) and discovered a *Government without a King, and a Church without a Bishop.*" The sentiment was responded to with loud and protracted applause. The manner in which the sentiment was received, Dr. WAINWRIGHT, an eminent Episcopalian Clergyman, thought justified him in alluding to it publicly. So at the Dinner which succeeded the Address, he repeated the statement of Mr. Choate, and added, that "if this were the proper arena. and were that distinguished gentleman (Mr. C.) to throw down the gauntlet on this question, I should not for an instant hesitate to take it up, and maintain on the opposite side, that there can be no Church without a Bishop." Dr. POTTS, a distinguished Presbyterian Clergyman, of what is termed the Old School, takes up the challenge, and, after some trouble in settling the preliminaries, the discussion is commenced.

It will be apparent to every one conversant with the religious controversies of the world in every age, that the whole question at issue is whether the doctrine of the Apostolic succession is a Bible doctrine or not. The denomination to which Dr. Wainwright belongs, asserts that there has ever been since the time of our Saviour a rank in the Church corresponding to that of the Apostles—that those who compose this rank derive their power in unbroken succession from the Apostles, and are now known under the title of Bishops. These alone possess the authority to confer subordinate power on others in the Church, and hence all ordinations except performed by Bishops are irregular, and cannot be recognised. All dissenting denominations, to one of which Dr. Potts belongs, recognise but one real rank in the ministry—and believe that the power of the ministry itself is held by the Church, since, under some circumstances, it can create a ministry. In the one case all authority and power being transmitted through the Apostles to a certain class of men, it is asserted also that no organization can be a Church without their sanction. On the other hand the power resting in a class that can reproduce itself, or in case of emergency, be produced by a body of Christians who have organized themselves into a Church, it is claimed that the various denominations organized as churches, are so, and their ministers all clothed with equal authority. That much may be said on both sides of this question is evident from the fact, that some of the purest and ablest minds that have ever blessed the world have defended both.

With these few remarks as to the *real* point at issue, and around which the whole weight of argument should gather, we give the Correspondence.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER I.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT :

NEW-YORK, December 27, 1843.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—Will you permit me to inquire whether the remarks ascribed to you, upon the occasion of responding to a sentiment at the late dinner of the New-England Society, are correctly reported? I am persuaded that the reporter must have done you great injustice in respect to *language, style, grammar, &c.*, for the report which I have seen is remarkably incorrect in these particulars, and strangely different from the accuracy with which other gentlemen are represented as speaking upon the same occasion. I refer to this fact, because it has led me to suppose it possible that the evident incorrectness of the report of your remarks, in the particulars just named, may extend even to the *sentiments*—and that you did not so broadly affirm the exclusive claims to prelatical Episcopacy, nor invite a challenge from the orator of the day to put you to the proof of those claims.

That there may be no mistake, I will quote the language ascribed to you, and to which I beg to refer you for explanation. It is contained in the "Morning Express" of the 23d inst. "*He (the orator of the day, Mr. Choate,) told you of some who in the days of William and Mary (an evident mistake of the reporter) found an asylum and discovered a government without a King, and a Church without a Bishop. (Cheers.)—Now, sir, notwithstanding this strong burst of approbation to the sentiment, were this a proper arena, should even the orator of the day throw down his gauntlet, I would take it up and say THERE CANNOT BE A CHURCH WITHOUT A BISHOP.*"

I repeat that I am quite unwilling to suppose that you have been correctly reported : because, although there are not wanting instances of the remorseless and arrogant exclusiveness implied in the above sentence, I cannot bring myself to believe that *you* would make so broad and unqualified a statement at any time, and least of all upon such an occasion. The statement, as it stands, affirms, not merely the relative superiority of diocesan Episcopacy, not merely that prelacy is essential to the *well-being* of a Church, but it goes the whole length of affirming that it is essen-

tial to its very being. *There cannot be a Church without a Bishop.* This is something more than a question of relative advantages ; it becomes a question of vitality, of existence itself. It is not saying, *our's* is a better church than yours, and *we* are better Christians than you ; but *our's* is the *only* church, and (by implication and fair inference) we are the *only* Christians ; accordingly the above passage can be no otherwise understood, but as declaring a readiness to prove that all "the Christian churches, in whose polity the element of prelacy is not found, are usurpers of a sacred name, that their ministry and sacraments are impious burlesques, and (inferentially) that their people must find mercy in some indirect way and creep into Heaven by some back door.

I repeat, again, that I am unwilling to believe that Dr. Wainwright would state so offensive a position at any time, and least of all on *such an occasion*. We all know the complexion of a *New-England* society, and the object of their festivities on the 22d of December. They were especially met to celebrate the civic and religious excellences of a band of exiles, whom the persecuting prelacy of the time had driven from their homes ; who actually laid the foundations of a "State without a King and nobles, and of a Church without a Bishop." That Church stands yet, and stands without a Bishop. To affirm, therefore, upon such an occasion, that there *cannot be a Church without a Bishop*, was to pronounce a sentence of excommunication against the great mass of those who were there assembled, and to affront their best sensibilities by defiling the graves of their fathers. I confess that the more I look at the language of the above extract, simply in the light of taste and courtesy, the less I am willing to believe it to be a correct report of your remarks.

But, should I unhappily be mistaken as to this, should this passage be a statement of your real views—views which I had supposed were at least never *expressed* without a good many *saving* clauses to make them tolerable to even the most credulous believers in high church rights—then, and only in that case, I am induced to ask whether you are ready to vindicate the truth of this statement. You speak of throwing down a

gauntlet, and declare your readiness to say, and of course to prove, that *there cannot be a Church without a Bishop*. I am aware that the form in which the words are placed is not precisely that of a challenge, but is it not a defiance? If it does not *give* a challenge, does it not *invite* one? There is no great difference between the two things, especially when we consider the circumstances. You could scarcely expect (I speak now, you will observe, upon the supposition that your language has been correctly reported) that the orator of the day would either throw down his gage of battle or take up yours, for it is altogether unlikely that his peculiar engagements would admit of this, however competent he is to justify this, or any other statement in his noble and beautiful oration. To offer or invite a challenge to controversy, under circumstances which will render its acceptance impossible, would be *unworthy* of an honest champion. Hence, this defiance must be understood to extend to any respectable adversary who accords with Mr. Choate's statement.

Now, although I am not a descendant of the Pilgrim fathers, and although I have no doubt that in all that relates to their peculiar claims upon the veneration and gratitude of future ages, there are many and fitting champions to be found among the sons of such sires; yet inasmuch as the language which is ascribed to you does not only assault them, but all others who are one with them in their rejection of prelacy; and furthermore, considering that if a challenge so public and offensive as this were allowed to pass *sub silentio*, it might hereafter be construed as an indication of conscious weakness, and not of contempt, I have overcome my unaffected reluctance to appear in the character of a controversialist, and now beg leave to say, that as an humble advocate of the ecclesiastical rights of the larger part of Protestant Christendom, I am ready to debate with you, in any form you wish, the position which you are represented as affirming, viz: "*that there cannot be a Church without a Bishop*." Of course a prelatial not a parochial Bishop is here meant. Without entering now into the merits of the question, I will hold myself ready (should you admit that the reporter of your speech has not done you injustice at least in this particular) to prove that this proposition is pregnant with innumerable evil consequences, theological, social and civil; and that it is *unscriptural*, *uncharitable*, *schismatical* and *anti-republican* in its character.

I have been induced to address you in this public manner, because from the nature of the case, the subject must sooner or later come before the public. The language ascribed to you (whether justly or not remains yet to be seen,) was not used in a private circle, was not whispered in confidential conversation; it was not uttered from one of the pulpits of your own denomination, nor was it found on the pages of a sectarian print like the self-styled "Churchman." Had it been, I should not have thought it worth while to notice it.—But having been used upon a festive occasion, before a promiscuous company, and in the most public manner, it is obviously no longer a matter for private communication. This will be my

apology for thus publicly inviting your attention to it.

Hoping that it will be found that you have been incorrectly reported, believe me, Rev. and dear sir,
Your obedient servant,
GEORGE POTTS.

LETTER II.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

NEW-YORK, December 30th, 1843.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—Your letter, addressed to me through the columns of the Commercial of last evening, was brought to my notice at so late an hour this morning, that there is not time to prepare and get to press such a reply as on every account it ought to receive from me. I cannot for a moment, however, delay acknowledging its perusal, and expressing my thanks for the courteous terms in which it is drawn up, at the same time stating my instant readiness to redeem any pledge I may have given in the few words spoken by me at the New-England dinner. As you suppose, my speech, (if a few remarks entirely extemporaneous can deserve such a name,) was most defectively reported, as I think, in the Express. I cannot distinctly recall every word I said, but as far as my memory serves me, the report contained in the Courier & Enquirer of last Monday, which, I am informed, is to appear in the American of this evening, is the most accurate I have seen. But as to the important point—and the one which alone called forth your letter—the sentiment I uttered is accurately reported, and I am ready, here and on every suitable occasion, to avow it and to maintain it; and if it is my lot to be called into the field, I cannot but congratulate myself that my challenger is one for whose private and intellectual worth I entertain so high a respect, and in discussing any question with whom I shall not fear the disruption of social intercourse, and much less the utterance of any expressions which may cause regret to our mutual friends of every shade of religious sentiment. But I must defer any farther observations until next week.

With much respect, your obedient serv't,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

LETTER III.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—In the few lines to which I was restricted on Saturday, I had only the opportunity of acknowledging the perusal of your letter, and expressing my readiness to meet you in the discussion which you invite. To some preliminary observations upon the occasion and character of your letter, which I should then have offered had there been time, I now ask your attention.

I cannot but deem it a cause of regret that, before taking so decided a step as that of addressing a letter to me in the columns of a newspaper, and thus leaving me no alternative but to reply to it through the same channel, you had not been at some pains to ascertain both the accuracy of the report of my speech at the New-England dinner which you quote, and the circumstances under which it was delivered. Had you pursued this

course I think you would very probably have come to the conclusion that the occasion did not warrant the public attack you have made upon me. Indeed, I doubt whether any one, maintaining opinions different from those which I hold upon the subject of the organization of the Christian Church, and who had been present both at the oration and the dinner, could have felt warranted in interpreting my language as partaking at all of the character of "defiance," to use your own expression; unless indeed his feelings had previously been in such a state of excitement as to produce a rapid thirst for controversy. You were not present, and therefore under this cover may escape from the consequences of such an imputation.

To my knowledge there were two clergymen present at the dinner, and, as I suppose, at the oration, who are as strongly opposed to prelacy in all its shapes as you can possibly be, and who are as able and I doubt not as ready as yourself to take up the gauntlet had it been thrown down upon this question, but who did not consider my remarks as partaking of the nature of a challenge or defiance. This consideration, however, is not of much importance now, because since the issue has been joined, I take it for granted that neither of us feels inclined to shrink from the encounter. I only allude to it to shield myself from the imputation of having justly provoked a religious controversy, to which my tastes and habits of life are entirely opposed; and which, in common, as I believe, with the great body of the community in which we live, I deprecate except under a very stringent necessity.

I am the more surprised at the course you have pursued, from your assertion that "you are quite unwilling to suppose that I have been correctly reported." Three different times in the course of your letter you make this declaration. Now, notwithstanding this emphatic reiteration, I fancy there must have been a sort of conviction in your mind, of which, probably, you were strangely unconscious at the time, that what I said had been correctly stated. Otherwise, I think you would not have been so ready to place yourself in a position, so undesirable for the members of our profession, as that of combatants in a daily newspaper, and compel me to follow you there. Had you made suitable inquiries, such as I should suppose would have been naturally suggested to you by your professed "unwillingness to believe that Dr. Wainwright would state so offensive a position at any time, and least of all on such an occasion," and one which "affronted the best sensibilities of those them assembled by defiling the graves of their fathers," and one which was objectionable "in the light of taste and courtesy"—had you made such inquiries, prompted by your implied previous good opinion of my social taste and courtesy and Christian charity, before visiting upon me a contingent public denunciation, you would have learned that while I affirmed a principle which it is notorious that the great body of the Catholic Church has ever maintained, it was done in an offensive manner, or an exclusive spirit, or without some provocation.

You ask if the form in which I placed the words—"There cannot be a Church without a Bishop," is not a defiance. If it does not give

a challenge, does it not invite one?" I reply distinctly, that what I said, taken in the connection in which I said it, was not a challenge, or a defiance; nor was it intended to invite either, from any quarter whatever. To assume such an attitude, on such an occasion, I should with you regard as an indication of exceedingly bad "taste," and as evincing a want not only of "courtesy," but of Christian charity.

What then, you will now perhaps be inclined to ask, were the circumstances which prompted the declaration I made, and authorized, in my judgment, its utterance at such a time and place? I will tell you: I was expressly invited to hear Mr. Choate's oration; and upon going to the Tabernacle for this purpose, and placing myself among the general mass of the audience, was drawn by the managers of the New-England Society from the unobtrusive position I had selected, and urged to take a more prominent situation by the side of the orator of the day. Whether or not it was prudent in me, holding the peculiar views of a churchman, to attend the celebration at all, is a question aside from the present matter, and one in which you can have no interest; but I may say, in passing, that it is a question, in regard to any future decision of which I have certainly obtained some new views from experience. Let this pass then.

I was present from the interest I felt on the occasion, as the son of a New-England mother, descended from a long line of ancestors reaching up to the early settlement of the country—as having passed my early years, from the age of ten to that of nearly thirty, in New-England—as having received my education in a New-England school and college—as having been connected, at two different periods, with two New-England parishes, containing the best and most affectionate people a pastor was ever blessed with—as having now many of my dearest friends resident in New-England, and closely identified with her literary, civil and religious institutions—and as regarding New-England with deep respect and affection for the intelligence and virtues of its people. In this spirit, and under the influence of associations so hallowed, I attended the celebration, as I have done in repeated instances before.

To the oration I listened, in common I believe with all who were present, with great admiration of the brilliant powers of the speaker. In the course of his remarks it fell in his way to declare that the Puritans in the reign of Mary, driven from their homes, sought an asylum in Geneva, where, said the orator, "they found a State without a King, and a Church without a Bishop."—Now, entertaining the opinions of a congregationalist, it was natural enough for the orator to express this sentiment. Its epigrammatic form gave it peculiar effect, but in ordinary times it would have been received, probably, with nothing more than the applause which a striking passage usually elicits. On the present occasion, however, it called down such long-continued and tumultuous cheering as I doubt not surprised Mr. Choate as much as it did myself.

Had the sentiment produced only the applause which follows the happy expressions of every popular speaker,—had it been cheered even in the same degree with other emphatic portions of

the oration, many of which for force, originality and beauty of illustration were much more worthy of admiration—I should have thought nothing of the occurrence and taken no notice of it. But the cheering was obviously, to my apprehension, not that of approbation of the orator, but of *defiance* of such as did not sympathise with the sentiment. How far all this was in good taste, or indicative of good feeling on the part of the majority of the audience, who must have known that many Churchmen belonged to the society, and were then present, and certainly that one was placed in a very conspicuous position as the guest of the society, I leave for others to say.

But it seemed to me to speak this language:—“Now, you advocates of prelacy, we have you; we are in the majority; we will make you feel how we detest your opinions, and if we cannot drive you from them, we will show you how unpopular they are, and at least, if we can, make you ashamed of them.” This I know was the inference drawn, not only by myself, but by many others who were present. Now what was to be done? To rise and leave the room would, in my view, have been a slight put upon the orator which he had not merited, for I am convinced that he did not intend to insult any class of persons, or to throw contempt upon their opinions. To abstain from attending the dinner to which I had been invited, and the invitation to which I had accepted, would have been a course open to a similar objection, and would, moreover, have indicated a morbid sensitiveness to popular disapprobation.

When, however, at the dinner, I was called upon to reply to the toast, “The Clergy of New-England,” &c., as the greater portion of those seated at the table had made part of the audience at the Tabernacle, I thought I had a right to avail myself of the occasion to show that I was not to be daunted by the fear of popular odium, or to be driven by the expression of it from the open avowal of my sentiments upon any question whatever. This alone was my motive for uniting with what I intended, poor as it may have been, as a compliment to the orator of the day, my dissent from that expression in his oration which had elicited the longest and most boisterous applause. The manner in which I attempted to protect myself, in a position which I acknowledged was sufficiently awkward, may have been unfortunate, and the attempt itself ill-timed.

I care not to rebut such a charge as this; but I will assert again that self-defence was my only motive. Many, I know, who differ widely from me on religious questions, do not regard the course I pursued as unbecoming or uncalled for, or as involving, as you suppose in your letter, any designed insult to the Pilgrims or their doctrines.—That you have arrived at a different conclusion I attribute to the fact of your partial knowledge of the circumstances of the case. Had you been present you would have felt, I doubt not, as others of our profession did who are as cordially opposed to the “regimen of Bishops” as yourself.

Having thus shown, as I think conclusive, that what I said was strictly defensive, and cannot justly, subject me to the charge of manifesting the bad taste, to say nothing more, or bringing a

controverted religious question gratuitously before a promiscuous assemblage of persons, I now come to the real, and henceforth, as respects ourselves, the only important question in hand.

You have seen fit—no matter whether inconsiderately, from want of full information in the premises, or deliberately—to give me, what I offered to no one at the New-England dinner, “a challenge and defiance.” I quote your words—“I will hold myself (should you admit that the reporter of your speech has not done you injustice, at least in this particular,) to prove that this proposition, (viz: ‘that there cannot be a Church without a Bishop’) is pregnant with innumerable evil consequences, theological, social and civil; and that it is *unscriptural, uncharitable, schismatical and anti-republican* in its character.”

I deny your assertion, in all its length and breadth, and hold myself ready to maintain my denial the moment you will enable me to do so by advancing the arguments on which you found this assertion. You leave to me the choice of the manner in which the debate shall be conducted.

I cannot for a moment suppose that you wish it to take the form of an oral disputation before a promiscuous multitude. Such an arrangement, I feel confident, you would regard as inexpedient on very many accounts. Shall the debate then be conducted through the medium of the daily press? Were this desirable I certainly should not have the slightest objection to the highly respectable journal which you have yourself selected. But the space we shall probably have to occupy would be greater, I apprehend, than any editor of a secular paper would feel authorized, in justice to the majority of his readers, to give up to a religious controversy. Besides, I confess that I should prefer much not to have the grave questions we must discuss mingled up with the politics of the day and local topics. And again I should wish, while giving all needed publicity to the controversy, and enabling those who feel an interest in it to observe its progress, to withdraw as far as practicable from a secular arena, in which I am sure it will give pain rather than pleasure to our common friends to see us contend.

I would propose, then, that we select, each one of us, a religious paper, the editors of which will agree that all the communications, as they appear in the one, shall immediately after appear in the other, without the slightest alteration or curtailment; and, moreover, that the editors respectfully shall abstain from any comments on the controversy during its progress. On my part I select the Churchman, provided I can procure the assent of the editor, whom I have not yet seen. But I think I can count upon his acquiescence. Should he decline the conditions, however, I will make some other selection.

In conclusion I must frankly avow that I do not believe we can either of us throw any light upon questions which have been so often the subject of dispute, and which for many years in continuous succession have employed the best abilities, and excited the fervid zeal of the most learned and pious divines of all persuasions. Still, if nothing new shall be elicited in this dispute—ann for myself I greatly doubt the learning or inge-

nuity of either of us to bring forth a single new argument—there is sometimes an advantage in having old questions stated in new forms and in new connexions, and with reference to the prevailing sentiments, opinions, wants and errors of the age.

Very respectfully, Rev. and Dear Sir,
I am your friend and servant,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.
January 2d, 1844.

LETTER IV.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT.

Rev. and Dear Sir—I had prepared an answer to some of the points in your last communication, and I was about to send it to this day's paper, when it struck me that there should be a previous settlement of the question as to the form which this discussion should take, or rather the channel through which it should be made known to the public. I will, therefore, withhold my communication until this question be arranged.

I believe each of the plans you notice has its peculiar claims. I should prefer the oral form, because of the greater freedom it affords; and besides, I have no objection that this or any other subject shall be brought before a public tribunal. I consider this to be a subject vitally affecting the public interest, nor can it be, as some among you seem to hold, a degradation of the claims of the Church, to defend them before a popular assembly. If, therefore, your mind be not entirely made up, I beg you to reconsider this point.

I have however precluded myself from any right to insist upon this, and indeed any other form—but the object of this note is to request you to meet me half way, and to agree at least in the selection of one of the daily journals. I have this objection, and it is a serious one, to the employment of the columns of the religious journals, viz: as they appear only once a week, the discussion would be protracted interminably. Besides, these journals are not circulated among that class of readers who are likely to be influenced by the discussion; for probably their minds are made up upon the point at issue.

I therefore beg, should you utterly decline an oral discussion, that you will at least assent to the very courteous offer of the "respectable journal" in which our communications have already appeared, and which has a claim upon us, for the courtesy it has already extended to us.

As soon as these points are settled, I will be happy to give a respectful notice to your last communications.

With much regard, Rev. and
Dear sir, I am yours, &c.

GEORGE POTTS.

Thursday Morning, Jan. 4, 1844.

LETTER V.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—I cannot but express to you my great surprise at your preference for an oral over a written discussion of any controverted point in religion—more especially one of the nature of that now lying between us, requiring, as it does, if it be thoroughly treated, the careful and deliberate examination of "Scripture and ancient authors." I have as little objection as

yourself to having "this or any other subject brought before a public tribunal." On the contrary, if there is anything which can overcome my repugnance to a religious controversy, and my regret at having been forced into one like the present, so often agitated and so thoroughly sifted, it is the hope of its attracting the notice and exciting the interest of many who have heretofore been ignorant of it or indifferent to it.

It is precisely because "I consider this to be a subject vitally affecting the public interest," that I wish it to be presented in such a form that the public mind may not be hurried over it without time for reflection, or be distracted or diverted from the true point at issue by those subsidaries which almost inevitably accompany an oral debate; but may have the opportunity to pause and deliberate and examine. So great is my confidence in the security of the position I have to maintain, that there is nothing I so much desire, since the controversy must take place, as that the whole community, far and near, should become acquainted with its whole progress; or, in other words, that it should be a popular one. And it is because a debate in the Tabernacle or any such place would embarrass, if not defeat, this object, that I am opposed to the arrangement you press so earnestly.

Does Dr. Potts really imagine that an assemblage, such as would throng the Tabernacle at the admittance price of a shilling a head (as has been proposed in one quarter,) to amuse themselves with the sharp encounter of two clerical gladiators, would be a suitable tribunal to judge and decide such questions as those which must of necessity arise in the discussion? Or that, however well selected such an audience might be on one occasion, the same persons could be induced to come and attend for several hours, day after day and through several weeks, to hear a theological question debated? And if not same throughout, and auditors of the whole of both sides of the argument, could they be well informed and impartial judges?

An oral discussion then could not lead to anything like a satisfactory final arbitrament between us. But you prefer it "because of the greater freedom it affords." What you mean by this freedom I do not precisely comprehend, but if you intend by it what it might be interpreted as implying, loose declamation, and the liberty of introducing irrelevant topics, instead of being restricted to close and well compacted argument, and confined rigidly to the matter in hand, this is a kind of freedom which I by no means desire for myself, and which I am willing to believe your good sense would lead you also to reject.

My objection to the oral form of debate, grounded on the partial and limited opportunity which would be thereby afforded to the whole community for becoming acquainted with the entire discussion, might be obviated, you may say, by the introduction of reporters for the public press. Now I acknowledge the great ability and general fidelity of this useful class of persons, and although through the inattention of some of them, on a recent occasion, I have been made to appear to you to have spoken in a manner "remarkably incorrect in respect to language, style, grammar," &c., and have reason to believe that

through their defective report of my speech at the New-England dinner I have been exposed to the misfortune of being drawn into the present controversy, I cannot deny that upon the whole they would give a pretty full and fair representation of the discussion.

This task, however, would be more difficult in the present than on ordinary occasions, inasmuch as we shall probably have to quote authors with whom we cannot reasonably suppose them to be acquainted, and languages with which they are not familiar. If, then, the intervention of reporters is needed to give a wider dissemination to arguments which must be otherwise restricted to a single audience in a single room, will it not be preferable that the debaters themselves shall express their sentiments in a manner for which they must be responsible, and which will not admit of their escaping, should they make an unfortunate demonstration, under the cover of an inaccurate report? I cannot but think, therefore, that the great body of the public will far more certainly be put in possession of the whole argument by a written than by an oral discussion.

The only advantage, as it seems to me, which the public could gain from the latter arrangement, would be that to the list of shows and popular amusements, already sufficiently extensive, another would be added. And as to the principles in the debate, their sole benefit would be the opportunity of displaying their forensic powers before a large and promiscuous auditory. Now I take it for granted that as with each of us the maintenance of truth and not victory over an opponent is the paramount wish, and that as neither of us has an unworthy appetite for popular applause to gratify, or is disposed to lend himself to any show whatsoever, to promote the popularity of any public place of resort, we shall best preserve our own self-respect and maintain our personal dignity by keeping aloof from any oral controversy.

I have thus, as you requested me to do, "considered this point," and my mind is now "entirely made up;" I "utterly decline an oral discussion," and I only feel regret as well as surprise that your urgency upon this point has obliged me to enter into the reasons for thus declining, and that our sympathies and judgments upon preliminary matters have not proved as much in harmony as I confess I had supposed them to be.

The next alternative which you propose is, that we should employ the columns of a daily paper rather than those of a religious journal, because, as the latter appears only once a week, the discussion would be "protracted interminably." I regret to perceive this intimation of your views as to the length of this controversy. For my part I shall wish it brought to a close as speedily as possible, for I can employ my time much more acceptably to myself, and as I believe much more profitably, in the peaceful and unobtrusive duties of my profession, than by taking part in a discussion which has often employed the pens of much abler and more learned men.

Your other reason for preferring a secular journal to a religious one, because the latter "is not circulated among that class of readers who are

likely to be influenced by the discussion; for probably their minds are made up upon the point at issue," does not offer any great compliment to "this class of readers" on the score of candor and openness to conviction. However, I will not dwell upon this point, but waiving my rights and my *decided preferences* in this particular, at your solicitation will consent "to meet you half way."

The courtesy with which we have been treated by the Commercial Advertiser, and the liberal offer they make of the use of their columns, settle the question at once as to which paper we shall select. I agree then, that all my replies to your communications shall be sent to this journal, with the express understanding that the editors will abstain from all comments themselves during the progress of the controversy, and will not allow the introduction of any communications touching the question; so that the attention of neither of us may be taken up by warding off side-blows from bystanders. Awaiting, then, the appearance of your next letter, I subscribe myself,

Very respectfully,

Rev. and dear Sir, yours,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

Friday morning, Jan. 5th.

LETTER VI.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT.

JANUARY 2, 1844.

Rev. and Dear Sir—I have now before me two communications from your pen, one dated the 30th ult, the other Jan. 2. In the first, you express your thanks for "the courteous terms" in which my letter of the 27th ult. was "drawn up"—and admit that "as to the important point, and the one which alone called forth my letter, the sentiment you uttered (*there cannot be a Church without a Bishop*) is accurately reported;" farther declaring your readiness "to avow it and to maintain it upon every suitable occasion," and concluding with some complimentary remarks, which I will do my best to merit. The latter communication, of this date, reached me late this evening, and I now propose to give it as prompt an acknowledgement as my pressing avocations will permit.

I have attentively and respectfully read it oftener than once, and with an honest desire to give the utmost force to the self-justification which is its principal object. I am not surprised, and I will add, not offended, at the somewhat marked change in the tone of your last letter; inferring from it, however, that, upon farther reflection, you had come to the conclusion that your previous commendation of "my courtesy" had been premature. I say this did not surprise me, because I felt very sure, from the beginning, that if the report of your remarks at the New-England festival should prove to be correct, you would speedily find yourself exposed to no small amount of animadversion, on various accounts, and hence would naturally entertain some displeasure toward any one who might call public attention to your unenviable position. I can say with unaffected sincerity that it pains me to find you in this position, and still more it pains me to be the instrument of exposing it to the public view.

I am perhaps indulging a vain hope when I

beg you to believe this; for you have already implied, if not expressed, a doubt of the sincerity of my "unwillingness to believe" that your dinner remarks had been correctly reported. I trust I am not in the habit of using words at random. I felt all that I described an *unwillingness to believe it*. I confess that my doubts were not very sanguine, but they were real, because, *first*, I am always shocked when I meet with any avowal of the unchurching dogma; *secondly*, because the manifest incongruity, to call it by no harsher name, between the dogma and the occasion inclined me to believe it possible that you had accompanied it with some unreported qualifying phrase, which had softened its aggressive aspect; and *thirdly*, because I deemed it respectful and charitable to suppose, farther, that you might be one of the number of prelates who hold the more tolerant views of the subject. That there are such (I would to God there were not so few among your clergy) is evident from your own expression, that "the *great body* of the Catholic Church" have maintained "the principle" you affirmed.

Why should I be suspected of disingenuousness in expressing a hope that you were in the kind-hearted minority, embracing many able ministers and worthy members of your communion, who cannot go the length of delivering over the vast majority of Protestant Christendom to "the uncovenanted mercies" of God, which are no mercies at all? I beg your pardon if I have offended by supposing that upon the point of "no Bishop, no Church," you possibly might accord with Cranmer, Whitgift, Usher, Stillingfleet, Whately and others, who seem to have had some bowels of compassion—rather than with Laud and Dodwell, and Oxford Tractarians, who thought no more of cutting off the heads of Christian Churches than if they had been so many thistles.

Before I proceed to set the main issue in its true light, I wish to make a remark or two upon a collateral point, yet one which affects the question—who is the aggressor in this case? You seem to lay considerable stress upon the circumstance that there were at least "two clergymen" present at the New-England dinner, who saw nothing worthy of animadversion in your remarks; I can only say that if they cared so little for their own denomination as to be content that it should be unchurching so publicly and so unceremoniously, they differ materially from two other clergymen who were also present, but who we no doubt withheld from rebuking such an attack upon the spot, solely by the consideration that a festive occasion was not exactly fitted for bringing "a controversial question before a promiscuous assemblage of persons."

In this connection, I beg leave to say also, once for all, that I hesitated some time before I could make up my mind to risk the suspicion of immodesty by venturing to take the place of abler and better men. I am very happy to say that my apprehensions on that score have been quieted by my knowledge of their approval of the step I have taken. Still, I wish you and them to hold *me alone* responsible. It is not, I assure you, from "a rabid rage for controversy," or from any overweening as to my own ability, that I have

thus turned aside from my more congenial occupation; but from a conviction of the impropriety of letting so offensive an edict of excommunication pass unchallenged.

When Dr. Wainwright, a gentleman, a scholar, a Christian minister, (in each of which titles there seems to be implied the idea of refined feelings as well as bland manners,) has taken so public, so extraordinary an occasion, for the purpose of unchurching the whole of Protestant Christendom, the Churches of Germany, Switzerland, France, Great Britain, Holland and America—all except the prelatical bodies in England and this country—it surely is high time to demand that the public should be put in possession of the evidence by which so bold and unflinching an assertion is to be sustained; or, if that evidence is not forthcoming, it is equally high time that the enormity of the assumption should be exposed. There are hundreds who can perform the task better than myself, but still I believe it is not a task which requires the strength of a giant.

And now to the point; for I will overlook many objectionable matters suggested in your letter, because I am anxious to reach the main point as speedily as possible. The sooner we settle those bearings of the discussion which are merely personal, the better will our readers be satisfied.

I am bound to say, in the outset, that having disclaimed an *intention* to offer an insult to the anti-prelatical Churches, I willingly discharge you from farther responsibility on that point. Had you, in addition, been pleased to qualify your proposition, so as to admit the ecclesiastical rights of those Christian bodies who 'hold the Head, even Christ,' I should have laid down my pen, even though you had claimed for your own body a lofty superiority. But you have made no such admission. You stand now where you stood, when rebuking the descendants of the Puritans. You have indeed denied any *intention* to be 'offensive,' or 'exclusive,' but the question recurs, was not 'the principle' you affirmed, *offensive* because exclusive? We are virtually charged with acting under forged commissions, with living in rebellion against God, because forsooth, '*there cannot be a Church*,' sacred and venerable name, the name of our birth-place:—without what? without Christ the Divine Redeemer? No: '*without a Bishop*.' But to be out of Christ's Church, in the most essential meaning of the phrase, is to be out of the pale of salvation. And hence to affirm that there is no Church unless it have a prelate, is to affirm something that goes very far toward shutting heaven against the whole of Protestant Christendom, with the exception of yourselves.

Now, if these consequences naturally flow from your position, I ask again if it is not necessarily an "offensive" position. And whether, therefore, you did not assume an offensive attitude when you uttered it? Let us settle this point first, and afterwards consider the plea of provocation which you offer in self-vindication, and we shall then be prepered to judge of the propriety of your attempt to alter the issue. Your object, my dear sir, is to exchange places with me. So I judge from the drift of your letter, in which you speak of "the public attack" I have made upon you;

of my having given you a challenge and defiance;" of my having forced you to follow me as "a combatant" in "a daily newspaper;" and finally, at the close of your letter, you leave the post you assumed on the 22d December, and call upon me to prove my negative of your proposition. In short, you wish to assume the attitude of defendant in this case, and to present me in the character of an assailant. This is a very ancient expedient in controversy, and is always resorted to by disputants who wish to avert from themselves the "imputation of having justly provoked a religious controversy," and to secure the sympathy of the by-standers, as wantonly assailed persons. I admit there is an advantage in this, but I think it can be shown that you cannot in this instance claim it.

For, first you made an *offensive attack*, not only upon the probable majority of your hearers, but upon the majority of the Christian Churches and ministers in this city. Whether meant to be so, or not, it was so. Whisper "the principle" in the blandest tones, and you do not change its real character. Say that you hold it in common "with the great body of the Catholic Church," you cannot evade the responsibility of having publicly uttered an offensive thing, by sharing that responsibility with others. Nor can I imagine a more beligerent style than that of the remarks which immediately accompanied it—"an arena"—"a throwing down and taking up of the gauntlet"—a readiness "to maintain that there cannot be a Church without a Bishop." I ask whether it was not Dr. Wainwright who "compelled" some one to follow him into the columns of "a daily newspaper;" for surely he could not suppose that in these days of newspapers and reporters, all that he might say upon this occasion would not be immediately sent off through the length and breadth of the land. I have seen many offensive and exclusive specimens of *Churchism* but never one the odiousness of which was more perfectly disembarassed of all ornamental drapery.

But secondly, it was provoked—and may you therefore justly claim to be excused from standing in the place of proponent in this discussion? Now what was the alledged provocation? I admit that this is the most important point in the preliminary question now under consideration. What was the provocation? Was there any that justified such a public repudiation of the majority of the churches of the Reformation? You expressly acquit the orator of any intention to insult those whom you call "Churchmen;" but you lay the whole blame upon the vehement applause of the audience. It was their noisy cheering of the orator's "sentiment," as you term it, that developed their latent detestation of prelacy, and discovered a determination to show its advocates how unpopular it was.

Indeed you intimate that there was something *personal* in the cheering, as those who were guilty of it "must have known, that (you) were placed in a very conspicuous position as the guest of the society." I think this is hardly charitable, to say nothing else, for I doubt whether the persons of the clergy are as well known as their names. I presume that the plaudits were given simply to the statement itself, and therefore the question finally presented itself in

this form:—Was there in that statement any attack, designed or not, against those who modestly call themselves, *par eminence*, Churchmen? and was it such an attack as imposed upon any of that number a necessity of manifesting his aggrieved feelings? This is the turning point in deciding whether or not you are to be held responsible, as the assailant in this case.

What, then, was the import of the language which seems so to have pleased the audience, and to have displeased you? I went no farther than to say that in Geneva the expatriated Puritans formed a republican state and a republican church; and this he mentioned to account for the republicanism which their descendants brought to New-England.

Now I grant you, most readily, that if the applauded sentence had been so framed as to assert or even imply that *this Church without a Bishop was the only legitimate Church*; if the orator had uttered the converse or rather the counterpart of your doctrine, and had said "there cannot be a Church *with* a Bishop," he would have advanced a dogma as offensive, as uncharitable, as anti-Christian, and, I will add, as ill-timed, as the dogma which you felt it your duty to advance.

I could have forgiven some exasperation of feeling, on the score of the injustice and arrogant wantonness of the assault. Sir, I rejoice to be able to say that you cannot find on the pages of any book of the least authority among us, or in any dinner speech that ever was delivered, the counterpart of your proposition affirmed. Mr. Choate did not affirm it; nor was this "the sentiment" which the New-England audience saw fit to applaud, not having the fear of Churchmen before their eyes. The head and front of their offending was this and no more, that they dared to insinuate that there *might* be a Church without a Bishop; that the Reformed Churches of the continent of Europe (all of which, *without an exception*, had rejected prelacy) were lawful Churches; that their Ministers, say Luther and a number of others, not altogether unknown to fame, as having done a little service to Religion and Liberty, were not usurpers simply because no Bishop had laid his hand upon their heads; that their marriages were not unlawful, their children not illegitimate, their baptism and communion at the Lord's table not a farce. In one word, Mr. Choate did no more than *church* the Genevan and Puritan Christians; he *did not unchurch* the prelatical Christians of England or even of Rome.

Now I beg leave to say that this is the material point, and it decides at once the question of your true position in the ensuing discussion, by deciding that as no attack was made upon the validity of your Church organization, so you were without any just grounds for the offensive, I mean the aggressive, attitude which you assumed at the table, when you told your audience that you would be willing to meet even the orator of the day, and prove that his Church at Geneva was no Church because "THERE CANNOT BE A CHURCH without a Bishop."

This is your proposition. I mean to hold you to this; and I now call upon you to commence the discussion by defining your terms. In answering your arguments, I shall have the oppor-

tunity I desire to "prove that this dogma is pregnant with innumerable evils, theological, social and civil, and that it is unscriptural, &c. &c."

I beg from you three definitions, which are indispensable to a right understanding of your proposition:

1. What is the Church ?
2. What is the Catholicity of the Church ?
3. What is a Bishop ?

With an apology for detaining you and your readers so long, believe me, very respectfully, your ob't servant,
GEORGE POTTS.

JANUARY 6, 1844.

P. S. Your reply of last evening to my note of the 4th, is open to some criticism, but I withhold it, because I do not wish that public attention should be fatigued with the discussion of collateral questions. I send the preceding letter to the journal which has been so politely offered for our use ; premising that, as far as possible, I will not trespass upon the courtesy of the editors, by lengthened articles.

LETTER VII.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

Rev. and Dear Sir—I had really supposed that after assenting to your proposition, to "meet you half way," all the preliminaries were definitely settled, and that having challenged me to the controversy and pledged yourself to the proof of an *affirmative* proposition, you would of course open the discussion. What was my astonishment, then, to discover from your letter, which appeared on Saturday, that a most important point is still undecided in your own mind, and that you have not yet concluded which side of the discussion you will assume.

I begin now to understand what you mean by that "freedom" which you consider one of the advantages of an oral debate. One of its privileges seems to be the liberty to change sides at your pleasure. I have good reason, therefore, to congratulate myself that I am not tempted to concede more than I did as to the form in which our disputation should be conducted, and allow my adversary to draw me into an arena where this dangerous propensity would be under less control than I mean it shall be, now that we are both tied down to our deliberate, recorded language. If, after the interchange of several letters considerably written—for you say "I trust I am not in the habit of using words at random"—our respective positions are not defined, I do not know how many hours' worth of extemporaneous words would have been consumed before we fairly got to work in good logical style—if we ever did.

In your first letter you throw out to me a contingent challenge in case I uttered a certain sentiment, and then you distinctly enunciate an affirmative proposition, and express your readiness to prove it. Let me recal to you your own words:—"I will hold myself ready to prove that this proposition, (viz: that there cannot be a Church without a Bishop) is pregnant with innumerable evil consequences, theological, social and civil; and that it is *unscriptural, uncharitable, schismatical and anti-republican* in its character." In your second letter you confess that your attitude is that of the challenger, by

acknowledging that you have precluded yourself from any right to insist upon the oral or any other form of discussion, this being *my* privilege as the challenged party. This is your language:—"I have, however, precluded myself from any right to insist upon this, and indeed any other form, but the object of this note is to request you to meet me half way," &c. And now in your letter of Saturday you coolly turn round and tell me in effect that *I* am the challenger and call upon *me* to commence the discussion. And not only so, but with singular modesty, and a very charitable regard for my incapacity to conduct my own side of the question, you suggest to me the very mode in which I am to begin, and select for me the words which it will be necessary for me to define.

This is sufficiently extraordinary;—but what is more remarkable still, and a thing, I suspect, unheard of before in any scholastic disputation, the very words you ask me to define are *constituent terms in your own affirmative proposition!* Thus you make an affirmation, pledge yourself to prove it, and then, in the very outset, ask of your opponent to define the terms which govern its meaning! I can hardly believe that you are aware of the position in which you have placed yourself. You say that "with unaffected sincerity it pains you to see me in a certain position," (in which by the way I do not find myself, and in which, I think, I shall convince the community, if not you, that I am *not*,) "and still more it pains you to be the instrument of exposing it to public view." Now with a sincerity at least as unaffected, I must say that it gives me no pain at all to expose your logical inaccuracy. You have controverted a proposition of mine, and you "desire to have the opportunity to prove that this dogma is pregnant with innumerable evils, theological, social and that it is unscriptural," &c.—and in the very same breath you ask for three definitions, "which are indispensable to a right understanding of my proposition."

Now if these definitions are indispensable to the understanding of my proposition, and you have not yet obtained them, you certainly do not understand it. And thus you have undertaken to prove that a proposition which you confess you do not understand "is pregnant with innumerable evils," &c. You may select either horn of the dilemma, as you please. IF YOU DID UNDERSTAND MY PROPOSITION IT IS WORSE THAN TRIFLING TO CALL UPON ME NOW TO TELL YOU WHAT IT MEANS. IF YOU DID NOT UNDERSTAND IT, WHAT RIGHT HAD YOU TO PLEDGE YOURSELF TO PROVE IT TO BE "*unscriptural, uncharitable, schismatical and anti-republican?*" Besides, as a theologian you *ought* to know the meaning of a maxim which has been extant in ecclesiastical language for centuries upon centuries; and within the last three hundred years thoroughly debated by the ablest theologians.

You advert again to my speech at the New England dinner. Presuming that you have not yet taken the pains to examine an accurate report of it, little as it deserves to be obtruded before the public, I append one in order that you may have no farther apology for misrepresenting its bearings.

Now will you be kind enough to examine my language? Do I say that I throw down the gauntlet, or wish or intend to throw it down? No—but that if thrown down I shall be ready to take it up. You have thrown it down, and I have taken it up. You bear on your shield the motto propounded some three centuries ago—*Ecclesia sine Episcopo—a Church without a Bishop*. I bear on mine the same which was on the banner of the Universal Church, without dispute or challenge, for 1660 years, and which, though since challenged, is yet borne without wavering by far the greater portion of Christendom. *Nulla Ecclesia sine Episcopo—No Church without a Bishop*. These mottos we have respectively borne and gloried in since we became teachers of the Gospel, and we might have continued to bear them peacefully, each in his own separate theological walk; but you have gone out of your way to challenge mine; I have accepted the offer of combat, however reluctantly, from my utter dislike of polemical strife, but I have accepted it.—And now when the lances should be ready in the rest, you stop and wish to deprive me of the privileges of the defied. Is this knightly? or, in the language of polished life, is it courteous? or, in the better language of religion, is it kind? Charity suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked—thinketh no evil, &c.

As to the “unchurching dogma” and the consequences you so liberally draw from it, I shall be ready to meet this point, and show your mistake as to the opinions and feeling of Churchmen, when you come to sustain that division of your proposition, “uncharitable.”

Let us now distinctly understand, and let the public understand, what are our respective positions. Upon leaving my study one morning, for the discharge of my parochial duties, I am informed in the street, to my great surprise, that a letter has been addressed to me in a public print by the Rev. Dr. Potts. It is put into my hand; I give it a hasty perusal; and, in full reliance upon his gentlemanly character, and under the influence of the recollection of the very pleasant though infrequent intercourse I have had with him, I reply to it as being courteous and kind.—Upon a second and more deliberate examination at home, I discover its covert design, now openly avowed in the letter to which I am replying—“to expose me to public view in an unenviable position.” It contains, however, a challenge to a public discussion in case I am correctly reported as having avowed my belief in a certain abstract proposition. I acknowledge the accuracy of the report, so far as that proposition is concerned.—The preliminaries as to place and form of debate are discussed and settled. And now Dr. Potts wishes to change his ground and make me the challenger, and of course the originator of a most unpleasant and uncalled-for controversy.

What you say, sir, about the Tabernacle scene, with a view of showing that no sufficient provocation was given for making the assertion, and that I was therefore the aggressor, (however it may be adapted for your purpose or popular effect) is entirely irrelevant.

Suppose it to be precisely as you put it. What then? It was not upon the condition that I was the “aggressor” in making the assertion, but

solely upon the condition that I made it, that you pledged yourself to prove it unscriptural, &c.

In conclusion, therefore, I have only to REPEAT that I did make the assertion, though not meaning it as a challenge; and that if you choose to redeem your pledge I am ready to meet you. If you do not choose you are at liberty to recede, and I stand in the position I occupied when you called upon me, and from which I shall not be either enticed or driven.

I am, Rev. and dear sir, your obedient servant.

JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

MONDAY, January 8th.

Dr. Wainwright's Speech at the New-England Dinner.

Mr. President and Gentlemen—I cannot for a moment doubt that the expression, “The Clergy of New-England,” in the sentiment just given, was intended to embrace all, of every name and shade of religious belief; and therefore, having myself once been a humble member of that venerated body, I venture, in behalf of all, to express to you our thanks for this honorable mention of us, and for the manner in which the notice has been responded to.

On all suitable occasions I would be the last to shrink from avowing and maintaining the distinctive principles of that Church of which I have the great privilege of being a minister. In such an encounter I should not fear to be bold and presumptuous as the declaration may seem, to confront even the orator of the day, who has so gloriously discharged his task, and in the presence of many of us this morning has hung around the naked rock of Plymouth strings of richest pearl and diamond in his eloquent address. I say I should not fear to controvert even him. In a part of this splendid performance, speaking of the Puritans, who in the reign of Mary were driven by cruel persecution from their native land to seek a refuge in America, he asserted that they there found “a government without a King, and a Church without a Bishop.”

Notwithstanding the approbation with which this sentiment was then and is now received, I must declare were this the proper arena, and were that distinguished gentleman to throw down the gauntlet on this question, I should not for an instant hesitate to take it up, and to maintain, on the opposite side, that there can be no Church without a Bishop. But such discussions are properly banished from this place and this society. Here we know nothing of distinctive or sectarian opinions upon the great questions of religion. And I rejoice that not only here but throughout the length and breadth of the land, whenever the clergy are thus honorably mentioned, no privileged order has a right to get up and arrogate this title to itself.

By the operation of the Constitution of our Country, we are placed upon an equal footing—we have all common rights, and if the Clergy understand their true interests, they will ever rally as one body around this sacred instrument, and look upon it as the ark of their religious as well as civil liberties. Around the altar of friendship and benevolence, also, reared by this Society, they may join hand in hand, and with sentiments of mutual respect and affection, devote themselves to one common object, the promotion of Charity. And when they retire from such associations, and return to their respective fields of labor, and are constrained, perhaps, to defend the distinctive principles of their Faith, would that they could ever bear in lively remembrance the Apostle's words: “Now abideth Faith, Hope and Charity—but the greatest of these is Charity.”

The Clergy of New-England! In me these words ever awake grateful and animating associations. God forbid that I should ever permit my individual opinions, upon questions of religious faith to blind my eyes in prejudice to those who differ from me, or close the affections of my heart against them.

It has been my privilege in past times to know, more or less intimately, clergymen of very different and even opposite opinions, whom I have, nevertheless, loved and venerated.—Who that knew any thing of Boston, twenty years ago, does not remember with unfeigned respect, the sainted Cheever, the first Roman Catholic Bishop of New-England—his eloquence, his simple and self-denying life, and his unwearied devotion to the cause of the suffering poor? Bishop Griswold the meek prelate of my own Church, I knew well—who that knew, did not venerate him for his learning, piety and worth?

I have known, too, Kirkland, the accomplished scholar and Christian gentleman, the dignified head of Harvard College. Of Dwight, the distinguished President of Yale College—the learned and the eloquent—I personally know very little, but for his memory I entertain unfeigned respect. With Channing, whose literary fame is the property of two hemispheres, I was brought into the connexion almost of relationship.

And here I cannot refrain from naming one whose religious sense it would be using, perhaps, not too strong language to say that I reprobate, but whose purity of life, integrity of character and many social virtues I remember with deep respect and affection. I mean Dr. Freeman. These are types of the clergy of New-England. I have been in years past many such, and in years to come I cannot doubt that there will be many more. But I have detained you too long upon such a theme, at the present time. I cannot, however, deem it other than becoming that the sentiment to which I

have thus inadequately responded should be given on this occasion, nor is it out of place for me thus to thank you, from the fullness of my heart, for the honor you have done the Clergy of New-England.

LETTER VIII.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT.

Rev. and Dear Sir—Before I have concluded this letter in answer to yours of the 8th instant, our readers will have discovered that it is not my purpose to retard the discussion of your proposition, by insisting upon the merely technical question, who shall, by the laws of defence, commence the discussion. I will commence it; but, in doing so, I mean to hold you strictly to the proposition you have thrown out as a defiance, and to keep yourself and our readers in mind that mine is an attitude of self-defence, against an assault, and an unprovoked assault, upon the character and rights of the great mass of our Christian fellow-citizens.

In my last I think it was shown conclusively that this was the case. You seem to have a suspicion that the close of my letter, which, indeed, contained the gist of the matter, was "well adapted for my purpose or popular effect." You profess not indeed to see its *relevancy*, but I think others have not failed to perceive that my statement of the circumstances convicts you of having made a gratuitous attack upon all who do not think that Prelates only can open the gates of the Christian Church. 'My purpose,' I admit, was 'popular effect;' and I feel complimented by your thinking that my argument has achieved my purpose. The reason of its fitness for 'popular effect' is not to be found in any special skill upon my part in stating the facts, but in the nature of the facts themselves. In a simple matter of fact, the best judge is the common sense of common people. I perceive that you do not yourself call in question the force of my argument, that as there was confessedly nothing in Mr. Choate's language, and nothing in the applause of the audience, which invaded your ecclesiastical standing, so you were not called upon, especially upon that occasion, to attack the ecclesiastical standing of the general community of Christians.

You will understand me, however; I do not think that the inappropriateness of time and place is the worst feature in this case of ecclesiastical proscription. It is the utter unreasonableness and the unrelieved moral deformity of the unchurching dogma, which, in my view, constitute its offensive character. I admire boldness, but not in a bad cause; and I hold that to be, *prima facie*, a bad cause, which, either in the pulpit of one of your Churches, or at the dinner-table of the Astor House, prompts any man thus to assail the Church standing, including the faith, hopes and rights, of his fellow Christians. When you set up a claim, not to a superiority, but to a *monopoly* of the privileges belonging to the house of God—when you set up this claim in behalf of a mere fraction, a molecule, of the Protestant community—and when such confessedly stupendous consequences are necessarily involved in the claim—it cannot escape the most unobservant reader, that to make out such a claim, its advocates ought to be prepared with proof, little short of *mathe-*

matical demonstration. And yet, as I shall hereafter more fully show, the extravagance of the claim is equalled only by the contradictory, indefinite, and I must add the absolutely ridiculous character of many of the arguments which are employed to sustain it. This aggravates the unprovoked assault you have chosen to make, and if, in the course of my future remarks, I shall speak of the high-Church dogma as it deserves, I shall hold myself absolved from blame as an aggressor.

Before I proceed to do for you, what you decline to do for yourself, i. e. define the terms of your own proposition so that the reader may understand them, (for I shall show you that I myself understand pretty well the sense you affix to them) there are two little pieces of history, given in your last letter, which call for criticism.

The first is that in which you are giving an account of the origin of this discussion, for the purpose of "letting the public understand what are our respective positions." It runs thus: "Upon leaving my study one morning, for the discharge of my parochial duties, I am informed in the street, to my great surprise, that a letter has been addressed to me in a public print by the Rev. Dr. Potts. It is put into my hand," &c. &c. This history wants the title-page, and a few of the first leaves. Will it not be better to supply the hiatus and begin at the beginning? It would be more complete if it commenced by recording the polite invitation which led you to the New England festival; the speech of the New England orator; the applause which accompanied him throughout, and which offended you so deeply, when he gave a sort of ecclesiastical genealogy of his forefathers; your determination to rebuke the orator and the audience, by declaring your belief, not that you had a better genealogy, but that their genealogy was absolutely spurious; your taking occasion two or three hours after, (when it might be supposed that you had had time for deliberation) to avow that if the orator of the day should challenge you, you would prove that of "the clergy of New England, who had just been toasted, there were none justly entitled to the name, except the 'sainted Cheverus,' and the 'meek Prelate of your own Church,' with their several subordinates of the Papist and Protestant priesthood; that this attack upon the self-respect and sensibilities of nineteen-twentieths, if not more, of your fellow citizens—I am almost afraid to say fellow Christians—was published throughout the land; and then, that *after all this had come to pass*, and you had perhaps congratulated yourself that you had chastised Yankee impertinence—then—"upon leaving your study one morning," &c. &c. &c. Is not the record unfair until these few little items are prefixed to it? I will leave the reader to say, whether the above be not the true Genesis of the present discussion.

The second piece of history, which is open to animadversion more severe than I can administer, is that which informs us of the comparative antiquity and universality of the motto which "you bear upon your shield:" "*No church without a Prelate*." At the very unqualified claim you make in respect to this motto, I would express my *wonder, surprise, astonishment*, &c. &c., were I not tired with that common practice of

disputants, a very efficient thing in rhetoric, but useless in logic. Whatever my wonder may be, I will not utter it. Besides which, after having seen how familiarity with extravagant statements often obliterates the intellectual sensibilities, just as a long familiarity with an offensive odor blunts the sense of smell, I have no longer a right even to feel surprise at the occurrence of such a phenomenon; no right to wonder that one, who had brought his mind to brave the consequences of the adoption of the unchurching dogma, should first of all find it easy to assert in a promiscuous company that Prelacy was of the very essence of the Church of God, and then subsequently, that this doctrine was "*borne on the banner of the universal Church, without challenge or dispute, 1600 years.*" Now this is a wonderful statement. I might show that so far is this from being true, the doctrine of monopoly—as I shall call it for the sake of brevity, and to distinguish it from true catholicity—is not countenanced by the voice of antiquity; that there were writers who distinctly denied it, and whole Churches, the Waldensian for instance, which always refused even to admit the element of Prelacy into their constitution; and all this long before the glorious Reformation. This is unquestionable; but that the reader may not rely upon the assertion of one who, he may suppose, "uses words at random," I will quote, from a disinterested witness, a single sentence; I will sit the authority of the learned Prelate Stillingfleet over against that of Dr. Wainwright. These are his words: "I do despair of finding any one single testimony in all "antiquity, which doth in plain terms assert episcopacy as it was settled by the practice of the primitive Church, in ages following the Apostles, *to be of unalterable divine right.*" So much for the "unchallenged, undisputed" antiquity and universality of your motto.

But leaving these things for future consideration, I proceed to the most alarming part of your last communication—I mean that in which I am warned, in capital letters, of a horned dilemma which is going me. It may be obtuseness in me, but I confess I do not see these tremendous horns.

My "modest" call for your own definition of the terms of a proposition which you *volunteered* to maintain, and which is the basis of this discussion, was dictated by the wish to put *our readers* in possession of your meaning in your own words. As to myself I had a shrewd notion of their meaning. The proposition is capable of *two* senses; but from the very circumstances in which you announced it, I am myself at no loss as to your real meaning. But I have heretofore imagined that no discussion could be carried on without a mutual understanding as to the sense in which the parties mean to use the principal terms and phrases. How long is it since this apparently indispensable preliminary has been expunged from the laws of debate?

Why you should manifest a reluctance "to commence the discussion by defining your terms," which is all I asked of you, is more than I will undertake to explain. But as you decline doing this, and as I must contrive some way of coming to an understanding as to the true *status questionis*, and the sense which our readers are to

fix to its *terms*, I propose to waive even this right, and to do your work for you, rather than to waste time in an idle war of words. In doing this, I shall at the same time state wherein your definitions and mine differ in meaning.

First: What is the meaning of the word CHURCH in your proposition? I am quite willing to take the definition of your own articles, which is as follows: "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same."—Art. 19. This, however, does not fully express the high-Church claims, inasmuch as it does not declare, (as it ought, if the doctrine of monopoly were true) that there cannot be a congregation of faithful men, and that the true word of God *cannot* be preached, nor the sacraments *duly administered*, &c., except under "the regimen of Prelates." This the framers of your articles studiously avoided saying, for it is well known that the English Reformers fraternized with the Reformed Churches of the continent of Europe.—Since the time of Laud, however, the "ne Prelate, no Church" dogma has been held by an increasing number of your communion, with more or less earnestness, although never without resistance upon the part of others, until it must be admitted that at the present time there is probably a majority of Anglican and American Prelatists, who hold the extreme views and maintain that Prelacy is—not simply scriptural and useful, and therefore the best model of ecclesiastical polity—but *essential to the very being of a Church.*

Of this number you are one; and the following is the gloss you must put upon your Church article, just quoted. The Church is a congregation of faithful men, and the pure word of God is preached in it, and it alone has the sacraments duly administered, *because* it has Prelates, through whom, as the delegates of Christ, and the direct successors of the Apostles, the inferior orders of the ministry receive a right to preach and grace to administer Christian ordinances efficaciously. In other words, the statements of these extreme Prelatists warrant us in saying that though men may believe, teach and practice *all else* contained in the word of God, yet if they reject Prelacy, they are not in the Church of God at all, and if saved at all, (of which some speak hopefully, but others doubtfully,) must be saved "as by fire," upon some undefinable principles of mercy upon which nothing that is said in the Gospel will justify them in relying.

Do I misrepresent your views of the indispensableness of Prelacy to the very existence of a Church? If so, you could have prevented the possibility of misrepresentation, had you, according to my reasonable call, defined your terms in your own language. This you can still do.

Secondly: What is the definition of the office and functions of a "Bishop?"

In your theory a Bishop is the highest of three grades of clergy:—Bishops, priests and deacons. He is set over a particular section or diocese, as its ecclesiastical head, and is invested with certain exclusive rights, which rights are thus stated by a Prelate: "The right to ordain and confirm,

that of general supervision in a diocese, and that of the chief administration of discipline; besides enjoying all the powers of the other grades."—(Dr. H. U. Onderdonk.) In virtue of the last two of these rights, expressed with an indefinite comprehensiveness which we will examine at a subsequent stage in the discussion, the Prelate has been known even to claim a control over the proceedings and minutes of a convention.

Farther, in order to the right institution of "a Bishop," in your sense of the term, he must have received his ordination from other prelates, and they again from others, so that an unbroken chain may convey the Episcopal grace from the Apostles themselves. This is the far-famed Apostolical succession, of which so much has been made of late years. Why this chain is considered of such consequence may be seen by the reader if he will peruse the following quotations—two out of a multitude which I have at hand. The first is from a well-known champion of Prelacy, Dodwell, in the following *moderate* terms. I beg the particular notice of the reader. "None but the Bishops can unite us to the Father and the Son. Whence it will follow that whosoever is disunited from the visible communion of the Church on earth, and *particularly* from the visible communion of the *Bishops*, must consequently be disunited from the whole visible Catholic Church upon earth; and not only so, but from the invisible communion of the holy angels and saints in Heaven, and, what is more, *from Christ and God himself*. It is one of the most dreadful aggravations of the condition of the *dammèd*, that they are banished from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power. The same is their condition also who are disunited from Christ, by being disunited from *his visible representative*."

The former Prelate of this diocese, Dr. Hobart, in his "Companion to the Altar," speaks the following language; it is equally kind as the foregoing: "But where the Gospel is proclaimed communion with the Church, by the participation of its ordinances, at the hands of the duly authorized priesthood, is the *indispensable condition of salvation*"—making a soothing exception in favor of schismatics and dissenters, who separate themselves from the regular priesthood through "*involuntary ignorance and error*."

I do not mean to discuss these monstrosities now, but will only add here that the ground upon which such assumptions are made is, that from the Apostles the Bishops alone derive Episcopal grace, which they communicate to the inferior clergy in ordination, and which, through the ministrations of the inferior clergy, is communicated to the people in baptism and the holy Eucharist, by the former of which a spiritual life is given, while the latter that spiritual life is fed and sustained.

On the other hand, our definition of "a Bishop" makes him nothing more than a pastor or overseer of a particular congregation, who is in all official respects, upon an equality with other pastors; who, in administering the discipline of the house of God, is associated with officers who are elected by the people, and who, in administering the ordinances of the Gospel, pretends to be no more than the ministrator of emblematic ordinances, whose virtue as seals of the covenant de-

pends altogether upon the faith of the recipients. Ordination, whether with or without the imposition of hands, is no more than a public and formal setting apart of a suitable individual to the work of the ministry, and is performed by his predecessors in the ministry. The case of those churches which have elected one out of the number of ministers to exercise certain supervisory powers over the rest, as is the fact in the Methodist and Lutheran Churches, is not an exception to the doctrine of the essential parity or equality of their ministers. These bodies do not claim a divine right for their Bishops or superintendents.

And now, finally, what do you mean by the *Catholic Church*? It is a phrase found in your former letters, and will probably occur again. I shall understand you to mean by it that portion of Christendom in which the above views as to the indispensableness of Prelacy are to be found. That is, you hold that Prelatical bodies alone constitute the Catholic Church. The Romish, the Greek, the Armenian and other Eastern Churches, together with the English and American Prelatists, are the only component parts of this Church. And their catholicity let the reader observe, consists not in purity of doctrine or forms of worship, (for you hold all those I have named, except your own, to be more or less corrupt) but in their being governed by Prelates. This is the essential element of their catholicity, this their redeeming excellence, this their evidence of being "in covenant with God."

On the other hand, in our view of Catholicity, you will find the main stress laid upon the maintenance of the essential doctrines of the scheme of redemption, and not upon the presence or absence of any external form of polity. We admit that even Prelacy does not vitiate the character of a Church, although we think it has proved itself to be a foreign and unwholesome element in the great Christian body. Thus, the reader will perceive that while our Catholicity proves its comprehensiveness by embracing all of every name whose recognized creeds do not absolutely reject the fundamentals of Christian religion, yours renounces all who do not admit the single item of Prelacy. Which of these views best deserves the name let the reader judge.

I close my letter by saying that if I had been privileged to meet you face to face, I should have exercised 'the freedom,' at which you seem to look with distaste, of insisting at once upon your obligation to give those definitions of your terms, and thus have saved myself the task of trying to reach the point thus indirectly, and the necessity of *waiting* for your answer. If you refuse to give me your definitions, or to correct those I have given, I shall hold myself at liberty to consider you as shrinking from the contest.

All the skirmishing in your last communication as to who is, technically speaking, the challenger, is of little consequence. I am resolved not to postpone the discussion of the monstrous proposition you have endorsed, by disputing as to who shall appropriate this title. I do not feel, I assure you, the least inclination to accept "the liberty to recede," which you kindly hint at, but will rather waive all petty questions of chivalry, quite certain that, from the beginning to the end of this discussion, it will be seen that mine is the

attitude of defence, and yours that of an assailant of the common principles of all anti-Prelatical Christendom. This is the important consideration.

I am, Rev. and dear sir, your obedient servant,
January 18. GEORGE POTTS.

LETTER IX.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—In concluding my last letter to you I said that I would not be either "enticed or driven from the position I occupied when you called upon me." Notwithstanding your pertinacious use of both these modes of controversial warfare, I stand there still, and *there* I mean to stand. You shall "hold me strictly" as you please to the proposition I have thrown out. I wish to be held there. But you shall not hold me to assent to your charge that this proposition was thrown out "as a defiance," or that yours is the "attitude of self-defence against an unprovoked assault." I have denied this before—I deny it again—if repeated, I shall henceforth deny it as a *slander*. I uttered "no defiance." I attempted no "ecclesiastical proscription." I "un-churched" no denomination of Christians.—God forbid that I, or any of those who symbolize with me in religious belief, should be guilty of such arrogance toward their fellow men; or, what is more dreadful, such bold assumption of the sole prerogative of God. The Church is His, and He has constituted it according to His own will.—Those who do not conform to its requisitions unchurch themselves. Instead of all this stale declamation, so often repeated to excite popular prejudice—so often answered—PROVE from Scripture and ancient authors that Bishops are not essential to the constitution of the Christian Church, and then your work will be done, and effectually done. But until you have accomplished this, all the charges in which you so liberally indulge about "exclusiveness, uncharitableness, monopoly of privileges, unchurched," &c. are utterly irrelevant, and only calculated (I will not say designed) to divert the public mind from the true issue.

Enough of this, however. Let me recal you once more to your true position. In your letter of December 27th you say, "I will hold myself ready (should you admit that the reporter of your speech has not done you injustice at least in this particular) to prove that this proposition (*viz.* there cannot be a Church, &c.) is pregnant with innumerable evil consequences, social and civil; and that it is *unscriptural, uncharitable, schismatical* and *anti-republican* in its character." I admit the correctness of the report. Issue is then joined, and what you have undertaken to prove is set forth in distinct and emphatic terms. You certainly will not say that you did not understand what you undertook to prove. You say, moreover, that "you are at no loss as to my real meaning." You have then laid your work for yourself. Begin to execute it, if that is your pleasure. My part of the work I shall manage in my own way; and when I come to use terms I will leave you at no loss as to their meaning.

As to the 'two little pieces of history' to which you allude, the first, in the modern department,

is really too small a matter to make it worthy my while to show how utterly disingenuous your representation is. As to the piece of ancient history, containing the allusion to the Waldenses, and to Bishop Stillingfleet, if you are indeed as ignorant as you appear to be on these points, and have implicitly followed Dr. Mason and Dr. Miller, without taking pains to acquaint yourself with the unanswered and unanswerable counter statements of Bishop Hobart and Dr. Bowden, I will, in due time, when the questions come up in their proper place, endeavor to throw some light upon them for your benefit.

My wish now is simply to let the public know, through my letter to you, as you avow that "popular effect" is your object, that to you are they indebted for this unfortunate, and I may add, unworthy exhibition of two clergymen contending in the public newspapers about a question which has been discussed over and over again, and access to the ablest popular arguments upon both sides of which is very easy, by reason of the republication in cheap forms of 'Miller's Letters,' &c., 'Bowden's Letters' in reply, and 'Hobart's Apology for Apostolic order and its advocates.'—I assert that to you, and to you alone, is it owing that we are both placed in this, which I will cheerfully acknowledge to be an 'unenviable position;' that to you is it owing that we are both subjected to the ribald remarks of licentious tongues and pens, and the sober disapprobation of a large portion of the secular press; that to you is it owing that our common friends and a large portion of the pious and sober-minded of all denominations feel deep regret and mortification.—My course was inevitable. You challenged me to controversy upon the credit of a common newspaper report; you took no private and friendly means to ascertain its accuracy; when the circumstances of the case were laid before you you refused to be convinced, and you still refuse.—Your character and standing in the community were so respectable, that I should have been a traitor to my own, if I had shrunk even in thought from your defiance. I have met it, and I stand ready to abide all its consequences. You now yield the point we have thus far contended for, ungraciously as I cannot help thinking, but you yield it. You say you "will commence," and thus, with the affirmative, have assumed the responsibility of the aggressor and the defier.—Proceed.

I beg you now proceed to the *proof*; and I take the liberty to beg you also to proceed upon the *purely scriptural and historical merits of the question*, and in a Christian spirit, avoiding (as I for my part, by God's help, intend to do,) all personalities, all injurious epithets, and all appeals to mere prejudice and passion. Injurious epithets decide nothing; for if my doctrine should be God's truth, what can they avail? Appeals to mere prejudice and passion decide nothing; they cannot put my doctrine in the wrong, any more than the universal clamor of all Ephesus put St. Paul's doctrine in the wrong. My views of Christian truth, you are bound to believe, are as sincerely and conscientiously held as your own. And wherever they are "*exclusive*" as toward yourself or others, I assert (what certainly you have no right to deny) that they are held in

my own feelings as CHARITABLY as yours can be, where the latter are exclusive as toward various other highly respectable bodies of professing Christians.

I have the honor to be, REV. AND dear sir, respectfully yours,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

FRIDAY, January 12th.

LETTER X.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :—The intervention of the duties of the Sabbath has delayed a reply to your last communication. I proceed now to pay my respects to it.

"To the hard words you have felt at liberty to use, I reply, nothing; to your reasoning, this."

I. I am in possession of abundant evidence, given to me personally by members and ministers of various denominations of Christians, including a number of your own, that it is very generally desired by this community that the nature and grounds of the monopolizing claims of high-church partizans should be examined, and, if unjust, exposed. However, therefore, I might feel myself justified in refusing any reply to your last communication, because of its angry and lordly tone, I am quite resolved that none of these things shall ruffle my temper, or deter me from what I conceive to be an important duty. I intend to go forward with my object, although it is very evident that in doing so I am acting in opposition to the wishes of yourself and your friends.

II. I cannot agree with you that there is necessarily any thing "unworthy" of the Christian or ministerial calling in making a respectable public journal the medium of communication with the public mind, upon a topic which was thought of sufficient importance to be introduced to the public attention first at a dinner table, and then, by report, through the daily prints. Is it too sacred for the one, then I appeal to you whether it was not too sacred for the other. This should have been considered beforehand, and the consequences—apparently so disagreeable to you—should not be laid at the door of him who feels bound to call in question a public and most offensive attack, as publicly as it was made. Whether it was or was not an attack, and even a defiance, against unoffending Christian denominations, whose several church relations are very dear to them, must now be left to the decision of the reader. To threaten me contingently with a charge of *slander*, for re-affirming what is so perfectly clear even to members of your own church, who have sought me out to speak of this matter, will not alter the truth or frighten me from calling things by their right names. I regret, with you, that this or any similar discussion has originated, just as I regret that a necessity should ever arise for the resistance of false and injurious principles or oppressive exactions of any kind. I regret that there is injustice in the world, and that there are insidious or violent assaults against God's truth; but since such things do exist, I do not regret that individuals can be found to whom the purity and integrity of truth are so much more valuable than a peace bought at the cost of a dastardly submission to error that they are willing to risk "the ribald remarks of licentious tongues and pens," and

even worse evils. Such results are to be expected when a contest for great principles takes place, and I do not deny that they are to be ranked among those injurious things referred to by the Saviour under the name of "offences," which He says must needs occur, but of which—be it observed—He throws the whole responsibility upon those who wilfully occasion them.

III. Without retorting any of the discourteous language with which it would seem you desired to anger me, I shall now take the liberty of stating the reasons why your refusal to define your position, by defining in your own language the terms you have used, is to be considered as a virtual shrinking from the contest for which you have so often professed your readiness and confidence. In the first place, you are violating the admitted rule of dialectics which requires beforehand unambiguous definitions of all the prominent terms that are to be employed in a discussion. The justice of this rule is obvious to any one; for without such explicit definitions, it will be easy for an opponent, when pressed by an argument founded upon the supposed sense of his own terms, to escape by affirming that he did not use them in that sense. But in the next place, we are discussing this point in the *presence of the public*, and it is not to be taken for granted that the public are as well acquainted as ourselves with the sense in which these terms are used by either of us. They can appreciate the force of arguments on either side only by first knowing the precise question of debate. And finally, I am anxious that you should set forth your meaning in your own words, because I desire the public to judge, from definitions of your own, that this is no small matter, about which it is idle to dispute. Neither of us thinks so. It is a question, which, in your view, involves matters of life and death, and which, in my view, affects Christian liberty as opposed to a spiritual despotism, catholic charity as opposed to schismatic bigotry, the spirituality of religion as opposed to a religion of sacraments, the efficacy of faith in the Redeemer as opposed to the efficacy of rites and ceremonies, and salvation received at the hands of Christ as opposed to a salvation deposited in the hands, and only dispensed through the intervention, of man, be that man presbyter, prelate or Pope. These are some of the points involved, and therefore the justice of the demand which, upon the part of the public, I reiterate, for a definition of your terms. You say you will define them when you come to use them; but you *have* used them, and the proposition in which you have used them is the very subject of debate. All I desire is to have the public put in possession of the high-church sense of them, from a source which none will suspect, as possibly unfair. Until therefore you give them yourself, or admit those I have given, you enjoy the advantage of Indian warfare, that of fighting from an ambush. Is this, however, an honorable position for one who should have nothing to conceal, and who has said that truth, not victory, is his object?

IV. I must now beg the reader's attention to a passage in your last communication, which cannot satisfy the least observant, although it denies as slanderous the charges which I have brought against your speech at the New England festival,

of "ecclesiastical proscription, unchurching your fellow Christians, defying them to prove that there can be a church without a prelate, and monopolizing the rights and privileges of the church of Christ." Were this denial accompanied by any expression of regret that you had incautiously used the language ascribed to you, and did not mean it to be understood in the sense naturally attached to the terms, I would at once relinquish my part in this controversy. But this you have not done. That language, in your own report of it, plainly conveys an assertion that the demonstrations of Christians in this and other lands who are not blessed with Bishops in your sense of the word, do not belong to the church of Christ. Can language be plainer? And how do you avert the odium which must attach itself to such a position? By ascribing to *them* the guilt and shame of "unchurching" themselves. *You* have not unchurching them, forsooth; they have unchurching *themselves*. But who says this? Not themselves, but Dr. Wainwright and his coadjutors. 'This is a sophism too obvious to produce much effect in releasing you from the stigma against which you so vehemently protest, and which involves in it all the proscription, monopoly and exclusiveness which I have—fearless of the risk of uttering a slander—charged against your "principle."—When analyzed, it is identical in meaning with a similar instance of bigotry, which I find in an Oxford Tractist. "How," he asks, "can we be justly charged with unchurching those who were never churching?" Instead of making good your denial, or justifying your threat of holding me responsible for *slander*, the passage in your letter now referred to only repeats the offence, with aggravations. "Be quiet, take the matter coolly," says an arrogant gentleman who publicly smites another in the face—"you have no right to resist, for you are a worthless fellow, and for that reason I would have you know that I did not strike you—you struck yourself." This would hardly prove a satisfactory mode of adjusting an insult.

I happen to be acquainted with the "unanswered and unanswerable" arguments and statements of Dr. Hobart and Dr. Bowden, and therefore decline any benefit from the plea of "ignorance," which you politely suggest. Still not having "implicitly followed Dr. Mason and Dr. Miller," greatly as I admire them both, I will, of course, be the more open to the prospective illumination so kindly promised me.

This, I believe, is all that I need to say, in justification of the course I have taken, and the views I have thus far advanced, and from the farther prosecution of which I am not to be deterred by abusive epithets, or charges of unworthy motives, no matter from what source they come. Those who know me know that nothing but a sense of duty can have prompted me to depart so far from my ordinary habits as a man of peace. Forbearance has a limit.

And now I shall proceed to state the question, as clearly as I can, hoping that the reader may, ere long, come to a more distinct understanding as to your views of the point at issue. Many persons will not believe that your words mean all that they appear to affirm. Let them have an opportunity of judging, from your own pen.

The language of your proposition is well known

by this time—but I will repeat it:—"There can be no church without a prelate."

I refer the reader to my last letter for the true sense of the words 'Church' and 'Bishop,' when used by high-church prelatists. I will not, therefore, repeat them here. Thus understood, I proceed to redeem my pledge, and to show that in its *nature and consequences* this position, though so confidently assumed, is *unscriptural*.

I wish that two considerations may be kept in view throughout my remarks, for they are necessary for a right understanding of my position. (I.) That I am not, in this discussion, the advocate of the ecclesiastical polity of that part of the Christian Church to which I consider it an honor to belong, except so far as that polity involves the ministerial rights of presbyters, or parochial (i. e. parish or congregational) Bishops. In affirming their rights, I affirm the rights of the presbyters of all anti-prelatical churches. (II.) I am not assailing the views of those of our fellow-Christians who believe that prelacy is scriptural and expedient, but who do *not* believe that it is so enjoined in scripture as to be a *sine qua non* in the constitution of the Church of Christ; and who accordingly admit that the order of a Presbyterian ministry is valid, though not the best order. With such I am not contending; we agree to differ; we concede to them what they concede to us, a legitimate standing in the catholic church. The dogma which I have undertaken to resist and expose, is that which makes prelacy *essential* to the very being of the church, so that without prelates there is *no* church, and of course, no valid ministry and ordinances, no promises of God, no lawful reliance upon God's grace, no covenanted mercies, and no just and certain hope of reaching Heaven. This is the dogma which you have received from Papist hands, and which I hold to be at war with the spirit and letter of the word of God.

I. Because there is no warrant from the Word of God for making *any* particular external form of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God, which are the distinguishing duties and privileges of the Church of Christ.

If there be such a warrant, produce it. The burden of proof rests on you. Let any one examine the tenor of the preaching of Christ and his Apostles, and then point to a solitary evidence that they placed, as you do, merely external relations upon a level with the exercises of the spiritual graces, of repentance toward God, and faith in Christ—or that they made the exercise of these spiritual affections dependent upon the individual's outward relations to a form of church polity. On the contrary, this is the very error for which they condemn most earnestly the high-church pretensions of the Jews of their day, who insisted upon their ecclesiastical relationship to Abraham, their possession of the ritual, their circumcision, their doctrine of uninterrupted succession; and who were so tenacious of these externals, that they were for bringing some of them into the Christian church with them. (See the Epistle to the Galatian church.) Understand me, I hold the Church of Christ to be a society, a community of believers; and agree that it is right to conform to the general principles which are to be found in

scripture for the regulation of that community, and the attainment of the end of all association, the benefit of those associated. I admit that I find what I conceive to be satisfactory evidence of a *best* form for the outward and visible Church; best, because best adapted for the development of the grand principles of individual and social piety and brotherhood. I find order enjoined, and submission to order; the preaching of the Gospel, and obedience to the Gospel when preached.—But I do not find any authority given for the doctrine you teach, that one particular order is absolutely essential to *the being* of a Church. I do not find that the preaching of the Gospel must depend for its efficacy upon the circumstance that it comes to the public ear through the lips of a ministry constituted after a particular fashion. The blessing of God is promised to the truth, and to men only as they preach the truth. The true apostolical succession is a succession of apostolic truth—and as compared with such succession, a line of Prelates reaching back to the days of the Apostles, though not a link in the chain were wanting, is as “the chaff to the wheat.”

Take another view of the subject. Profound learning, combined with unquestionable piety, has been long employed in investigating the question as to the precise and detailed forms which the earliest Christian communities assumed, under the eye of the Apostles. And what has been the result of their inquiries? An acknowledged diversity of opinion. Men *who have fully agreed in regard to the great moral truths of the Gospel* (and let any one take the written creeds of the various Christian bodies in the Protestant Church, and he will be struck with this doctrinal unanimity,) have come to different conclusions, as to various points affecting the polity or external organization of Christian communities.

Now, do we not find in this acknowledged diversity of sentiment upon the question of *formal* religion among those who are admitted to agree upon the question of *real* religion, proof that scripture lays a very different stress upon them, and the most powerful argument for mutual forbearance and toleration? And is it not incompatible with common sense—I say nothing now of charity—for any one denomination, with these facts before them, to insist upon disowning fellow Christians who agree with them in every other particular of faith and obedience to the spiritual laws of Christ, upon the single ground that they have not conformed to their *views of government and order*? Is the unity of the Christian body a unity in respect to form? or not rather a unity in faith and love for the same grand moving truths of the Gospel? Do none belong to the body of Christ, his church, but such as agree with us in every thing? And if differences are allowable, as you must admit, shall we restrict our communion to those who do not hold our views of *church order*, although they may hold every thing else? In one word, is it not a sin against the spirituality of Christianity, that we should elevate conformity to what we deem true views of church order to a level with the “weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy and faith?”

I cannot but think so. And strong as are my preferences for a particular form of government,

I dare not deny, as you have done, that the man who is “a Christian” is by that very fact a member of Christ’s church. You are bound to these alternatives: either to admit the covenant relations of other Christian churches, or by denying them, to admit that God has poured out his blessings, and raised up hosts of eminent, learned, devoted and useful Christians, among Christian bodies which were never in covenant with him. If, as you will not deny, he has actually done the latter, then the inference is, either that yours is not the *only* church, or that, if it be, it is not the only or the principal channel of spiritual good to the world. In other words, Heaven has made no such discrimination between you and others as will justify your exclusive claims.

This is a common sense argument, and it confirms the position taken in the outset of these remarks, namely, that the formalities of religion ought not to be raised to the level of the spiritualities of religion; because all *fact* establishes the infinite superiority with which scripture invests the latter. The inference we draw is that there is no warrant from scripture for making *any* particular external form of polity, a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God, which are distinguishing duties and privileges of the church of Christ.

Asking pardon for the length of this communication, I reserve other scriptural considerations for another occasion, and remain,

Respectfully, yours,

GEO. POTTS.

LETTER XI.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: The first half of your letter is taken up with matters to which I shall reply very briefly.

In the first place you still discuss the question as to who is the assailing party in this controversy, and reiterate your conviction that it is I who am the aggressor. My dear sir, let us drop this discussion. I can by no means admit the justice of your charge. Let the public decide between us on this point—I am quite willing to submit it to their decision.

In the second place you speak of the “angry and lordly tone” of my last letter—its discourteous language,” designed “to anger” you—and of the “abusive epithets” and charges of “unworthy motives.” I am totally unable to perceive that I have given you any just ground to speak on this wise. I cannot for one moment admit that I am justly chargeable under either of these heads. I have only to say again, let the candid public judge between us.

All the other points in your preliminary observations, that have any bearing upon the simple question in dispute, shall be disposed of in their proper places.

We have now got fairly to “the dogma” which you say I “have received from Papist hands,” and which you hold to be “at war with the spirit and letter of the Word of God.” I have received it from Papist hands precisely in the way in which you have received the Holy Scriptures, and the doctrine of the Trinity and the Atonement, &c. You surely will not esteem it a just ground of objection to any doctrine that it has been held

by the Church of Rome in common with the great body of the Church catholic, at all times and in all places. And as regards this dogma, remember that its truth was never disputed, and conformity with its distinctive provision never departed from until after the Reformation; that it formed no ground of objection in the minds of the first reformers, to the Church of Rome, and that these great men yielded it up with marked reluctance, and only from the compulsion of the circumstances in which they were placed. But the question now properly before us is, where does this dogma, as you term it, find its *origin*, not through what channel it has come down to us. If it is "at war with the spirit and letter of the Word of God," as you say, I acknowledge that no power of prescription, no universality of acceptance, could sustain it for one moment.—Here I join issue with you, and say that the principle, there 'can be no Church without a Bishop,' is not anti-scriptural, but is in perfect consistency "with the spirit and letter of the Word of God." You ask me again for my definition of the terms "Church" and "Bishop." I reply that I use them precisely in the sense in which they are used in the standards of the Church of which I am a member. These are contained, as you know, in the Book of Common Prayer—to these definitions it is my intention rigidly to adhere, and if you detect in my remarks any departure from this resolution and will expose it, I shall thank you cheerfully and amend the error. I presume you are equally ready to be bound by your own standards, and I will ask you for no other definitions than those which are there recorded, or which may be logically inferred from their plain propositions. You maintain your affirmation, 1st, on this ground—"because there is no warrant from the Word of God for making any particular external form of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God, which are the distinguishing duties and privileges of the Church of Christ." Now suppose it were as you affirm, this would not make Episcopacy anti-scriptural any more than you will allow Presbyterianism to be anti-scriptural. Episcopacy excludes Presbyterian ordination just as Presbyterianism excludes congregational or lay ordination.

But this reminds me that we have one or two questions to settle in relation to your exact "position," before we can proceed with a clear mutual understanding. I take it for granted that you admit a ministry by God's appointment to be necessary to the being of a Church, and that this ministry derives its authority, not from men, nor from the Church itself, but from Christ, the head of the Church. We must, if you please, be very explicit on this point, or our discussion might soon assume a rambling and discursive character, which it is the interest (for the saving of time) and, I doubt not, the wish of us both to avoid. In the considerations you offer as "necessary for a right understanding of your position," you say that you are "not the advocate of the ecclesiastical polity of the Church to which you belong, except so far as that polity involves the ministerial rights of presbyters or parochial (i. e. parish or congregational) Bishops." Now what are these ministerial rights, and whence are

they derived? I think that when you have answered these questions the Congregationalists and the Friends, and some other denominations, will not find much to choose between us as "to charity," "exclusiveness," "unchurching, &c."

I presume, then, you hold to the doctrine "that the Christian ministry is essential to the Church and must always exist." I dare say that in this point we should both coincide as to what is "the spirit and letter of the Word of God." St. Jerome, the father by no means least in favor with you, says that is "not a Church which has not priests." The Lutherans, in the Confession of Augsburg, declared that "in order that we might obtain justifying faith the ministry of preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted," and they add that they condemn "the Anabaptists and others who think that men receive the Holy Spirit without the external word." Calvin argues at length in proof of the necessity of the ministry in the Church—saying, that "the Church is not otherwise edified than by external preaching"; he affirms that "Christ so ordained the office of the ministry in the Church, that, were it taken away, the Church would perish."—In your own confession of faith, chapter XXV., section 2d, it is asserted—"The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel, (not confined to one nation as before under the law,) consist of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ—the house and family of God—out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation"—"Unto this catholic, visible Church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world, and doth by his own presence and spirit—according to his promise—make them effectual thereunto."

Thus Christ is represented as giving the ministry equally with the oracles and ordinances, and to the same end. In the form of government of the Presbyterian Church, Chapter III, "Of the officers of the Church," we read—"Our blessed Lord at first collected his Church out of different nations, and formed it into one body by the mission of men endowed with miraculous gifts, which have long ceased." "The ordinary and perpetual officers of the Church are Bishops or pastors, &c. And here Ephesians IV. 11 12, is referred to as authority, where Christ is spoken of as appointing the ministry. "And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." As touching this point, then, we agree that a ministry, divinely appointed, is essential to the being of a Church. I presume, too, you would admit as readily that this ministry must be Apostolical; derived from Christ in some way through the Apostles. An Apostolical ministry, then, you must acknowledge to be "essential (to use your own words) to the very being of a Church, so that without it there is no Church, and of course 'no ordinances, no promises of God, no lawful reliance upon God's grace, no covenanted mercies, and no just and certain hope of reaching heaven.'" Observe, I do not give all these inferences as my

own. You have put them upon me as resulting from my position, that a "Bishop," or "Prelate," as you choose to quote me, is essential to the being of a Church. I am authorized, therefore, I think, to put them upon you as resulting from the doctrine we hold in common, that an Apostolical ministry is essential to the being of a Church.

You have unchurched, then, the Quakers and left them to the uncovenanted mercies of God; you have unchurched the Congregationalists, you have unchurched the whole body of Methodists, you have unchurched large portions if not the whole of the Baptists, to the full extent that I unchurch you. Do you shrink in "horror" from a proposition so "monstrous"? If you can escape from it I shall be glad to know how. If you do confess that this is your position, as far as I can see you must relinquish the doctrine of the ministry and the church, as maintained, I believe, in all the reformed creeds, and certainly in your own. Now this is a point upon which I should like some satisfaction. And if the result of your reconsideration of the subject should be that we symbolize on this grand point, perhaps you will agree with me that we had better not prefer against each other any charges of "uncharitableness," "exclusiveness" "unchurching," &c., but since we both agree that "there is warrant from the Word of God for making a particular external form of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God which are the distinguishing duties and privileges of the Church of Christ," we calmly proceed to inquire what that external form of polity is. You will perceive that I return to your own first argument against my position, requesting you to reconsider it and see whether it does not militate against fair inferences to be drawn from the standards of the Church to which you belong.

I should conclude my letter here, and await your answer, for I am anxious that our communications should be short, by being restricted as far as practicable to a single point, both with a view to our own convenience and what I believe to be the public wish, but I must correct you upon one point where you have certainly greatly misapprehended my views. You say "let any one examine the tenor of the preaching of Christ and his Apostles, and then point to a solitary evidence that they placed, as you do, merely external relations upon a level with the exercise of the spiritual graces of repentance toward God, and faith in Christ." My dear sir, I will not doubt your sincerity in making this charge, but I beseech you to examine again those expressions of mine to which you have given a construction so abhorrent to my clear convictions of Christian truth. Place external relations upon a level with the exercise of spiritual graces—repentance and faith!!! Never, never, could I do this. Formalist as you may believe me to be, I beseech you make me not appear to value the body more than the soul. I believe that in this world the intimate union of both is essential to life. The body we know cannot live without the soul, nor have I ever yet learned that God has permitted a soul to exist in this probationary state without a body, but do I therefore place as high a value upon the body as the soul? By no means. I only contend that what "God hath joined together" man

should not attempt "to put asunder;" if he hath said concerning his Church, there is "one Spirit," he hath also said "there is one body."

I am, Rev. and Dear Sir, your obedient servant,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 17th.

LETTER XII.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: As our readers will have perceived, I have been too anxious to reach the merits of the question before us, to insist with any pertinacity upon technical questions. It would have been very easy, as I believe, to make successful battle upon all the points you have raised from time to time, but as it would have entangled the question, I have waived them. I am now in some hope that there will be, henceforth, a fair and manly grappling with the real point at issue between us.

I have but a single remark to make, before I proceed to notice your last communication. It is in relation to my supposition that your preceding letter was composed in "an angry and lordly tone," and contained "discourteous language which I forbore to retort." Ordinary people do not deem a charge of *slander* very civil; yet this charge you brought against me, in company with other ungracious language, "stale declamation," "instructing my ignorance," &c. Though this style of dealing with an opponent passes with many as equivalent to argument, and is considered an evidence of cleverness, I hope no temptation whatever will seduce me into the use of it. Hard arguments and hard words do not belong to the same category.

Passing all this, I repeat my satisfaction that "we have now fairly got to the dogma, which I hold to be at war with the spirit and letter of the word of God," no matter now from what hands you have received it. You call upon me to "remember that its truth was never disputed until the Reformation; that it formed no ground of objection in the minds of the first Reformers to the Church of Rome, and that these great men yielded it up with marked reluctance, &c." You can hardly expect me to "remember" this, for I do not believe it to have been so, but on the contrary, I think I can show that it *was* not so. I will not touch that point now, for you admit that this question is not properly before us, and that the true issue is whether, as you have affirmed, Prelacy be *essential* to the *being* of the Church of Christ. I am glad to find that you are ready to abide by the *Word of God*, as the only authority which we are now to summon to the decision of this question.

My first reply to your affirmation, that Prelacy is essential to the being of the Church, and the reply to which I restricted myself in my last letter, was this—"That there is no warrant in Scripture for making any particular external forms of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God which are the distinguishing duties and privileges of the Church of Christ."

You say that were the argument I have advanced true, i. e., were it true 'that there is no warrant,' &c. &c., this would not 'make Episcopacy anti-Scriptural,' any more than Presby-

tery. This, I beg to say, is not the point in hand, for I admit that the argument bears equally on Prelacy and Presbytery, as respects the making either of them exclusive. Either may, according to the different judgments of their respective advocates, be the most conformed to the Scripture model, and yet neither, as I maintain, should be raised to the rank of an *essential* condition of Christian brotherhood and communion with God. You may think Prelacy most clearly taught in Scripture, as I do Presbytery, but the question which I pray you to bear in mind, is, shall we, on the ground of our respective opinions on a question of *forms*, about which multitudes of wise and good men differ, although they are agreed in respect to the spiritualities of Christianity, as a moral institute—shall we, I say, proceed to deliver each other over ‘to uncovenanted mercy;’ in other words, excommunicate each other from the covenant of God, and its promises and privileges? Against any position of which this is the natural and inevitable consequence my whole soul revolts.

Now what is your reply to this? Why, after assuming two things, which you say I must admit, and which I do admit, you proceed to infer that I must, if consistent, run upon the very same consequences which I have charged against your own position. You quote from various authorities, Jerome, the Augsburg Confession of the Lutheran Church, Calvin, and the Presbyterian Confession, to show that a “ministry” is essential to the visible Church. Agreed: I had already admitted this, when giving an account, in my last letter, of what I found in Scripture concerning the essentials of Church order. But another postulate, which you take for granted I will concede, is that this ministry “must be apostolical, that is, derived from Christ in some way through the Apostles.” Now I fancy that this is the point where your argument falters. This is a venerable term, this “Apostolical,” and not more favorite with yourself than with me; but still I am satisfied there is a fallacy in your use of it, which I will proceed to notice in due time. Supposing me then to admit “an Apostolical ministry of the word and ordinances,” as essential to the very being of a Church, you proceed to draw the necessary inferences for me in these words—“You have unchurched, then, the Quakers and left them to the uncovenanted mercies of God; you have unchurched the Congregationalists; you have unchurched the whole body of the Methodists; you have unchurched large portions if not the whole of the Baptists, to the full extent that I unchurch you; and you significantly ask, no doubt with some triumph over my foolish inconsistency, whether I do not shrink “in horror from a proposition so monstrous.”

I answer this question, thus put in irony, emphatically in the affirmative. I do shrink from it with horror. And more than this, were your retort of this charge of unchurching the several bodies you name a just retort, I might well admit my folly for having forgotten the familiar proverb, about living in glass houses and throwing stones. But I can dispose of the retort in a very summary manner, and without any impeachment of my consistency, and can show that I do not unchurch my fellow Christians of these large and

respectable denominations (who hold the essential truths of the Gospel) in any sense, much less in the sense and “to the extent” in which you unchurch me. Am I to suppose that in making the above averment you meant to be understood as asserting a *matter of fact*? You must surely have known that as a *matter of fact*, we freely recognize the essential character and Church rights of these bodies of Christians. This is notorious. You must mean, therefore, *that if I carry out my principles*, I must do, what you do, unchurch the above named bodies. Your argument is *ad invidiam*, but it fails to answer your object, because I shall now proceed to show that it not only contradicts matter of fact, but is built upon a false inference of your own, from our views of what constitutes a valid ministry.

First. It contradicts well known facts. The only apparent exception is the case of the Friends; concerning whom as a society a variety of opinions exists. They are divided into two opposite parties, one of which rejects, as we both believe, the very fundamentals of Christianity, while the other holds fast (so far as I know) to evangelical truth, though with a mixture of doctrinal errors. It is only concerning the last that there can be any question in this connection.—These do not reject a ministry, for they have ministers and elders, after their own sort; nor do they reject the ordinances of the gospel professedly, simply contending that these ordinances are to be observed spiritually, and not at all externally. Now I consider these views as seriously defective, but if through these views they hold communion with the *Head* of the Church, I dare not deny that they are living members of his *body*. Their ecclesiastical organization may be defective, but not in such a sense as to destroy their hold upon the blessings of God’s covenant.

As to the other bodies named in the above extract—Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists,—there is not even a faint shadow of authority for the assertion that I unchurch them, in any sense, least of all in the sense in which you unchurch me. To make this out, you must be able to adduce *facts*, not inferences. The facts to the contrary lie open to the knowledge of any man. The mutual interchange of ministerial services proves that it is not so. If a minister of any one of these Churches desires to enter into the ministry among us he is not re-ordained; should a member of one of these Churches choose to unite with us, in constant or only occasional communion, he is not re-baptised. You cannot point to an individual among us who would hesitate to sit down at the table of our common Lord, with accepted members of any of these Churches. We honor them, as the possessors of the truth, and as having the best of all *imprimaturs* to attest the validity of their ministry and ordinances, viz: the seal of God’s spirit, which has made each of these bodies eminently useful in improving mankind. We rejoice in their successes in accomplishing so glorious an object, and consider their successes as the best of all evidence that God is with them, and has recognized their organizations as possessing the essential features of the catholic Church. Do they send forth their devoted missionaries to a foreign field, we

never interfere with their labors, as you have done in reference to those you call Lutheran-Calvinists, but we bid them God speed, cherishing no feelings of rivalry, much less of animosity, upon the ground that they do not articulate our Shibboleths in our way. What son or daughter among *us* will refuse to meet a pious parent of another Church, at the Lord's table, (as is notoriously the case among you,) upon the ground that it is not the Lord's table, and that those who meet at it are not ministers or members of Christ's Church? These are significant questions, simply put, and I beg the reader to ponder them and decide how little reason there is for the opinion that there is not *much* to "choose between us, as to 'charity,' 'exclusiveness,' 'un-churching,'" &c.

Such is the state of the facts. But, second, you will reply that our practice is inconsistent with the principles you have quoted from our formularies. To this I answer, that in those formularies there is not a word which condemns our practice. Let the reader examine your references and decide whether they are liable to the charge of exclusiveness. Farther, let him turn to Book I. Ch. I. of the Form of Government, and he will find a distinct declaration that we "believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles may differ;" and that "in all these, we think it the duty, both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance." What clearer renunciation of exclusive claims can be given than this?

But to leave no room for the charge of inconsistency with our doctrines, let me add that the principles in regard to a ministry, which are set forth in our symbols, no where make a linked succession of *individuals* an indispensable requisite in ministerial investiture. It is at this point that I detect the fallacy of your retort—a fallacy already adverted to, and which I promised to notice. You demand from me that I should admit an *Apostolical* ministry—i. e. "one derived, in some way, from Christ, through the Apostles."—I do admit it, but evidently not in your sense, for in your sense an *Apostolical* ministry embraces the idea of an unbroken series of *individuals*.—Now were I disposed, I think it would not be difficult to show that if there be any weight in the claim of such an unbroken series of ordinations, *we* can establish as perfect a right to it as *you*. The only difference between us being this, that we trace the series through the ministers of Christ's Church as *presbyters*, and you as *prelates*. But we lay no stress upon this, first, because no stress is laid upon it in Scripture, (if there be, you can show it,) and secondly, because we can conceive of cases in which it would be the duty of Christian believers to disregard the punctilios of ecclesiastical genealogy, which a regard for regularity and fitness would lead good men to observe under ordinary circumstances.—Conceive, for instance, of a community of Christians cast upon a desert shore; they have the word of God, but no minister; shall they continue for ever without the offices of Christianity, and not rather appoint one or more of their number who shall give himself wholly to the work of ministering God's word and ordinances? Such

a one, I believe with Luther, would be as truly a presbyter as if he had been consecrated by all the Bishops in the world. Conceive, again, of the possibility of so extensive an apostacy from substantial Christianity, in any body calling itself a Church, as to make communion with them no longer tolerable, is there no remedy? The English reformers thought differently, and so did the reformers of the continent, and so in their turn did Wesley and his coadjutors, and a large body of the Puritans. In one word, the exercise of the right of separation is to be justified or condemned, in the first instance, by the facts which caused the separation. If unnecessary, the separation is schism, and its immediate authors are to be held responsible; but, if necessary, the sin of schism rests upon those who made it necessary. The grand point is not whether the seceders in any case carry along with them a ministry derived from the body they are quitting, but whether they carry God's word with them as the charter of Christian rights, organize themselves in substantial conformity to that, and then humbly ask God's blessing.

I have neither time nor room to expand these truths, and apply them to the case in hand. Let it be sufficient to add, at present, that an *Apostolical* ministry authenticates its title to the name by the fact of its ministering *Apostolical* truth and ordinances, and by the seal of God's blessing upon its services. No other title-deed can be compared with this. Who gave the better evidence of "divine right" to preach the Gospel and administer its symbolic ordinances, a Robert Hall or a Dean Swift, a Dr. Chalmers or a Lawrence Sterne?—A thousand thoughts crowd upon me here, but I must suppress them.

Thus, I have "given you some satisfaction," I hope, by showing that the views I hold upon the subject of an "Apostolical ministry" are in perfect harmony with the detestation with which I regard the frequent and offensive assaults made upon the various bodies of non-prelatical Christians.—We "do not," as you perceive, "symbolize upon this point." I have carefully reconsidered "my first argument against your position, and I think I have shown, both from fact and theory, that it *does not* militate against fair inferences drawn from the standards of my own Church;" and of consequence that it is not only a fair argument itself, but fair for me to use, and that you have now to answer or admit. It still remains untouched.

I may pause then, until it is answered; only observing upon the last paragraph of your letter, that in saying that you place merely external relations upon a level with the exercise of the spiritual graces of repentance and faith, I stated what I conceived to be a *fair inference* from the high-Church dogma, which makes a Prelate as indispensable to the Church as a Savior. I rejoice at the adhorrence you express for such a consequence, it is a fearful consequence, and as I hope to be able at some future point in this discussion to show that it is a legitimate child of its parent, may I not hope that you will see it to be your duty, in the sight of God, to renounce the parent as well as the child? Would to God it might be so. Oh, sir, this dark world is not so full of Christians that we can afford to alienate any of them, by magnifying our

points of difference. Why, by insulting their sensibilities, make it impossible for them to greet each other in respectful love, and work together and contend together against spiritual wickedness in high and low places? Let us look at this single city in which our lot is cast; its thousands who despise the truth, the history and present state of crime and ignorance, the yet unoccupied fields for holy enterprise, the progress of Papal errors—let us consider these things but a moment, and say whether, instead of uniting our forces against this legion of evils, we shall rather whet our swords against each other, and imitate the spirit of the mistaken disciple, who seems to have claimed credit of his Lord for his exclusiveness, saying “master we found one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, *because he followeth not with us.*”

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE POTTS.

LETTER XIII.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

REV. AND DEAR SIR—We are by no means so well agreed upon first principles as I had supposed, and therefore, to my regret, I find that we have not arrived at that stage of the argument which I thought we had reached when I addressed to you my last letter. The necessity is now imposed upon me of taking a step backward, in order to meet you fairly. Having for my opponent an eminent divine of the Presbyterian Church, and one in connection, as I am informed, with “the old school,” I certainly took it for granted that he would hold himself bound to maintain that doctrine, upon the question of the Christian ministry, which the standards of his Church so clearly set forth. Upon this supposition the statements and inferences of my last letter were grounded.

This doctrine I stated in substance as follows, viz. that the Christian MINISTRY is essential to the Church and must always exist—that this ministry must be DIVINELY APPOINTED—and that it must be APOSTOLICAL, that is, deriving its commission in some way from Christ, the head of the Church, through the Apostles. Had you admitted these first principles to the extent in which I supposed, and still suppose, them to be held in the teaching of your standards, the points between us would have been reduced to this one:—What is the nature of the Apostolical ministry? does it subsist in one order alone—that of presbyters—or does it of necessity require three orders, Bishops, presbyters and deacons, and how is the title to this ministry to be authenticated?

As I now understand you, you admit that a “ministry” is essential to the visible Church. I request you to observe, however, that the postulate which I advanced, as the one to which I presumed we should both yield our assent, was not “a ministry” simply—but “a ministry *divinely appointed.*”

Now from a careful examination of what you advance under the two heads of “facts” and “principles,” I am compelled to infer that according to your theory it is not essential that the ministry should be divinely appointed. It may be self-constituted by an inward call, or it may be constituted by the simple “appointment, by a

community of Christians, of one or more of their number, who shall give himself wholly to the work of ministering God’s word and ordinances.” Thus the Friends, you acknowledge, have a ministry. Their “organization may be defective,” but still they have a ministry, and in your view ordinances also. How this allowance of ordinances, destitute of external signs and seals, accords with the doctrine of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith on the subject of sacraments, I will not now stop to inquire. Under your head of *principles* you state a hypothetical case—which, you leave me to infer, therefore, is the illustration of a principle. “Conceive,” you say, “for instance, of a community of Christians cast upon a desert shore: they have the word of God, but no minister; shall they continue for ever without the offices of Christianity, and not rather appoint one or more of their number who shall give himself wholly to the work of ministering God’s word and ordinances?”

To meet this imaginary case let me suppose another. Suppose that in the shipwreck which cast this unfortunate community upon a desert shore, they had lost their last copy of the sacred Scriptures, but had saved or could procure materials for writing; would they not, for their own satisfaction and for the benefit of their posterity, make a record of all they could remember of the word of God? But would it be the word of God? And would they not, upon the first opportunity, cast aside their imperfect manuscript, and with joy and gratitude return to a complete and well authenticated copy of the holy book? But to reason from such extreme hypothetical cases is always dangerous and unsatisfactory. We should be careful how we erect an extreme case of exception to a general rule into a principle. Your use of the one just mentioned, however, under the head of “principles,” shows that while you allow a ministry to be essential to the visible Church, you do not admit that it must of necessity be “divinely appointed.”

Now, my dear sir, although I did not undertake to defend the Presbyterian doctrine against Congregationalism, and perhaps should I succeed in doing so, may receive no thanks for my pains, yet as this course will serve my purpose as well as any other, I shall endeavor to controvert the views you have advanced in relation to the ministry, by an appeal to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith and the Larger Catechism.

What, then, is the question now in dispute between us? I will state it again, and as distinctly as I can, with a view to a clear comprehension by those of our readers who are not familiar with theological subjects of this nature.

It is not whether Bishops in any sense, that is, diocesan Bishops, having charge of many congregations, or parochial Bishops, having charge of but one, are essential to the visible Church—but it is whether a ministry of divine appointment—that is, a ministry receiving its commission from other ministers possessing divine authority to bestow the commission, in contradistinction to a ministry holding its sole authority through the appointment of the members of a Christian congregation, is essential to the visible Church.

On this question I will, with your permission,

change places with you and take the affirmative, that the former and not the latter is a true ministry according to the Word of God.

That the Church is a visible body—that is, an association of men professing the true religion and united together by some outward organization—we both agree. Now what is essential to this organization? The Confession of Faith, chapter XXV., section III., replies:—"Unto this catholic visible Church CHRIST HATH GIVEN the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by his own presence and spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto." Now Christ gave the "ministry" just as he gave the "oracles" and "ordinances," and his presence and spirit are equally promised to all. It is styled the "ministry of God," just as the Scriptures are styled the "oracles of God." No man, no body of men, however learned or pious, could indite other oracles, or sanction other ordinances, and by parity of reason they could not appoint any other ministry. And he has left the ministry in no painful doubt as to its continuance; for when he gave it its grand commission he said, "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The ministry must be derived from Christ or it is no valid ministry at all. As he hath conveyed his word to us through a long succession of ages, and preserved it in periods of ignorance, confusion and darkness, so hath he conveyed to us the ministry and so preserved it; and the same line of proof and argument which traces back the "oracles" and "ordinances" to the Apostles' days, traces back the "ministry" and proves that it is divinely appointed.

But here we touch upon the question of succession—which, however, I mean to reserve for future and fuller consideration. The present argument is preliminary; for if you can set aside the necessity of a ministry *divinely appointed*, in the sense that I have attached to the words, the question of succession is an idle one.

I next quote the Confession of Faith, chapter xxvii. section 4. "There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the Gospel, that is to say, baptism and the Supper of the Lord; neither of which may be dispensed by any but by a minister of the word, lawfully ordained." In support of the condition that this minister must be *lawfully ordained*, the Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. verse 4, is quoted: "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Now, that the Confession of Faith is right in thus considering the divine call of Aaron as an external call, is manifest in that, according to Scripture, it was not a simple spiritual preparation for the sacred office, nor was it a designation by the choice of the congregation of Israel; but, having been selected by God, he was visibly set apart and consecrated by divine authority. And moreover, the Confession of Faith might greatly have strengthened its position, had its compilers thought it needful, by referring to the following verse: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest: but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee." If the blessed Saviour, prepared as he was by the indwelling of all the

fullness of God's spirit for his great work of the ministry, did not enter upon it without an external ordination, can we doubt of its necessity to the complete organization of his Church to all future time?

But power greater even than that of administering the sacraments is conceded to the ministry by the Confession of Faith, Chapter XXX, sections 1 and 2: "The Lord Jesus, as King and head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent both by the word and censures; and to open it unto penitent sinners by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censure as occasion shall require."

Here are powers which no man certainly would take unto himself, and which it would be reckless contempt for the prerogatives of God for any congregation of men to pretend to confer. Nor is the Presbyterian Church guilty of such awful presumption, for it is expressly acknowledged that these powers are derived from the Lord Jesus, and they are exercised in virtue of authority from him—and not by any delegated authority from the Church.

I go forward now with the Larger Catechism. Question 63 is as follows: "What are the special privileges of the visible Church?"

Answer—"The visible Church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all members of it, *IN THE MINISTRY OF THE GOSPEL*," &c. The visible Church being thus under God's special care, and being protected and preserved in all ages, can we suppose that he would suffer the "ministry," which he originally gave to it through Christ, to be lost any more than the "oracles and ordinances" which he also gave? Again, the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ, are enjoyed *in the Ministry of the Gospel*. If these blessings are to be enjoyed in the ministry of the Gospel, this is the channel through which they are conveyed; and the channel must be as permanent and continuous as the stream which is to flow through it, and therefore both channel and stream are of divine appointment.

In the Larger Catechism, question 158 is as follows: "By whom is the word of God to be preached?" *Answer*—"The word of God is to be preached by such as are sufficiently gifted, and also duly approved and called to that office." The inward gift alone, then, is not sufficient, nor the approval of this gift by the Church, but there must be a call to the office. Of what nature is this call? The text referred to answers the question:—"And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Observe that this same text was cited in the Confession of Faith, in explanation of what lawful ordination is. To be "duly approved and called," then, is to be lawfully ordained, and

to be lawfully ordained is to beset apart outwardly by those possessing authority to this end by divine appointment.

I might here proceed to make other extracts from the standards of the Presbyterian Church, and sustain those I have made by parallel passages from the standards of her sister Churches around us, and illustrate the whole by unequivocal language from the teachings of her ablest doctors—proving that the undoubted doctrine of this Church is, that a ministry divinely appointed by external ordination is essential to the visible Church, and proving, moreover, that this doctrine has the surest warrants of Scripture and sound reason—but enough has been said.

So much for the principles maintained by your standards. As to the general inconsistency of your practice, as indicated in the array of *facts* which you have drawn up, that is your affair and not mine. However, if you will permit me I will observe that I think instances are not wanting to show that other communions interpret the standards of your Church, and the practice of that section of it to which I suppose you belong, in the sense I have expressed, rather than in that which, incautiously perhaps for the purpose of this discussion, you have asserted.

The Congregationalists do not seem to think that you are one with them. In the Congregational Catechism, bearing the imprint, New-Haven, A. H. Maltby, 1844, the last question of the book is:—"In what important respect does the Presbyterian Church agree with those just mentioned, (viz. the Protestant Episcopal and Methodist Episcopal Churches,) *contrary* to the primitive and Congregational system? *Answer.* "In depriving the brotherhood of each particular Church of the government thereof, and vesting all ecclesiastical power in the hands of Church officers." What the Quakers and Baptists might have to say to your catholic practice I will not undertake to determine. And whether in "missionary" enterprise and the circulation of God's word you find yourselves in brotherly unity with the Methodists, I need not inform the public. But I will say that the professions of your last letter, of catholic affection and practice, are strangely illustrated by the charge brought against you by 60,000 of your Presbyterian brethren, that in Anno Domini, 1837, you by an act of discipline cut them off from your Church, because they adhered to a "plan of union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists" for the work of the Gospel; or rather because, as Church members, they were embraced in a system which grew out of this union.

Into the merits of this charge I do not enter—for I do not make the charge—but may it not be well for you to remember that while you are bringing accusations against me for "exclusiveness" and "uncharitableness," and are ringing all possible changes upon the word "*unchurch*," 60,000 of your laymen and 500 of your clergy are of your clergy are hurling an accusation against you? They employ the stronger word "excommunicate." Does not this tend to show that whatever may be your mercy toward Quakers and others, this mercy has not been extended to these your brethren? You "excommunicated" them—without citation, and without a trial—not

on the ground of apostasy from the essential faith, but on the pretension that the "plan of union of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists" was unconstitutional, irregular and unnatural.—You "excommunicated" them all. This, I believe, is their charge against your Church.*

The facts and principles advanced in your last letter, I think, have been shown to be inconsistent with your standards. But you will say no—and refer again to book I, chapter I, of the Form of Government:—"They also believe that there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters and principles differ. And in all these they think it the duty both of private Christians and Societies to exercise mutual forbearance toward each other." Who can doubt the truth of this position, or dissent from it? There are many 'truths' and many 'forms,' as to which we differ, that I should think it a waste of time to dispute about. But the question is, whether among these 'truths and forms' the standards and doctors of your Church mean to include the doctrine in question between us, namely, that of a divinely commissioned ministry. If they do not, your quotation does not hold good for the purpose for which you cited it—and that they do not, I think I have sufficiently shown. And surely you yourself do not set so lightly by the ministry of the word as to regard the question between yourselves and the Friends, and the Congregationalists, as only a question of form.

If you do, I am confident that the most learned and eminent of your brethren will not coincide with you. Did I regard the discussion between us as involving only matters of form, I would instantly drop my pen, destroy what I have written, and retire from the field, conceding to you the victory. But it is very far from being, in my view, a question of "form" or a dispute about "externals." It involves a principle of the deepest importance—a principle which in my view has brought down to me, from my blessed Saviour, that covenant of mercy in which I place my hope of salvation, and which is forever to protect this covenant and convey it to all the lost and perishing sons of men—not relaxing its watch and ward over it till the Church militant on earth shall become the Church triumphant in Heaven. But even if it were a matter of mere form, if God has ordered and appointed it, how dare we say that it is not indispensable?

It may seem to you ungracious in me to adopt the line of argument to which this letter has been devoted, but I plead as my apology that I have been constrained to do it in self defence, for so far as as the doctrine goes, of the necessity for a divinely appointed ministry, desiring its authority from Christ, by external ordination by other ministers, I am a Presbyterian, in the sense which I attach to your standards. If you cannot come and stand with me on this ground, and there with me try our strength whether I must remain with you or you be compelled to go onward with me, I shall be forced to leave you in the latitudinarian region of Congregationalism till some other opponent from the Presbyterian

* A Review of the leading measures of the General Assembly of 1837. By a member of the New-York bar. *New-York*: John S. Taylor, 1838. *The American Biblical Repository*. Vol. XII. page 219. State of the Presbyterian Church, page 221. Whatever may be ultimately decided to be the legal rights of the parties, *the Church is in fact divided.*

ranks presents himself to break a lance with you; or in other words I shall consider this point as sufficiently established, and in my future letters shall take it for granted, without farther argument.

Now, in a few words, let me say, in conclusion, that it may be distinctly marked, that your own standards plainly and unequivocally set forth—

I. That the ministry is given to the Church by the self-same authority which gives to it the Holy Scriptures, namely, *Christ's authority*. As Christ's authority must be binding in one case as absolutely as it is in the other, it follows of course that the Presbyterian Church holds a divinely appointed ministry to be essential to the being of a Church.

II. That this divine appointment is given in an *external commission*, through ordination by other ordained ministers.

Now it is for you to say how the ordaining ministers are invested with Christ's authority to ordain. Observe, the question is not concerning the internal call and qualifications of the *candidate* for ordination—but concerning the qualifications of his *ordainers* to give him his outward call. The question is, not whether *he hold the faith of Christ*, but whether his ordainers have authority to give *him the commission of Christ*—so that the scriptural rule may be obeyed which is referred to by yourselves as bearing upon *external ordination*—"No man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that was called of God, as was Aaron."

Do you or do you not believe that you can, consistently with your standards, with the teachings of your accredited ministers, and the most eminent living doctors of your Church, affirm that a minister can be lawfully commissioned otherwise than by *external ordination by other ministers, who have themselves been externally ordained?*

I am, Rev. and Dear Sir, your obedient servant.
JONATHAN M. WAINWRIGHT.
MONDAY, Jan. 22d.

LETTER XIV.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT:

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—Were I disposed, I might easily show that from the very commencement of this discussion, my opponent has been busily employed in endeavoring to shift the ground of it, and to make an issue altogether different from that which presents itself to every unbiassed mind as the true one. I will not call the various movements, which he has made, evasive, capacious or 'ungracious,' but will leave the reader to judge for himself, after a review of them. At the New England Dinner, under very extraordinary circumstances, you volunteer to maintain, upon a 'proper occasion,' that '*there can be no Church without a Prelate*,' thus unchurching the great mass of Protestant Christendom. The 'proper occasion' is offered to you, by one who feels that his character and usefulness are publicly assailed by the above proposition. Instead of standing upon any question of mere technicalities, and contesting the points 'who is the challenger,' and 'who shall commence the discussion,' I ask from Dr. W. such a definition of his terms as will put

the public in possession of his meaning, under his own hand and seal; but this under the cover of a technicality, is indignantly refused. The right to make this demand, though so obviously just, is also waived for the sake of reaching the merits of the question. Again, I proceed to redeem my pledge, and to show that the unchurching dogma, so offensively advanced, is *at war with the spirit and the letter of the Word of God*. My first argument is that "there is no warrant from Scripture, for making *any* particular external form of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God, which are distinguishing duties and privileges of the Church of Christ." I give some proofs of this position, (see the close of the fifth letter,) and call upon Dr. W. to furnish—if he can—evidence to the country. The only reply made to the position is, not that it is untrue, but that *I cannot consistently* assume it, because it is repugnant to the standards of the body to which I belong, which standards, with all the adroitness he can employ, my opponent strives to show are as *exclusive* and unchurching as his own dogma. Thus again is an attempt made to evade the real issue. Although not bound to make any reply to this, I consent to go out of my way to show that both fact and theory demonstrate conclusively that the Presbyterian Church, neither in its standards nor in its practice, gives the least plausible ground for this *argumentum ad invidiam*. To repeat what was said upon this point would be to repeat the whole letter. The sum of the argument was briefly this: that while—in common with the Churches upon the continent of Europe, the various families of the Presbyterian Church in this country, the Congregational Churches of New England, the Methodist and Baptist and other Churches of Christ—we maintain the necessity of a ministry, and an Apostolical ministry, divinely derived from Christ, in some way, *through the Apostles*; we do not maintain that such a ministry, in order to authenticate its title, must, of necessity, be derived through an unbroken succession of *individuals*.

Believing that I had said enough upon this point to satisfy any reasonable mind that there is nothing inconsistent with the principles of my own communion in the argument which I submitted to you as long ago as the 16th of January, I awaited your answer. But what is that answer? Neither more nor less than another evasion of the real question. Instead of a manly grappling with the true issue, your last communication is entirely occupied in a repetition of the process to which your previous letter was devoted.

Now I ask, and many a reader has asked, whether this does not seem like trifling with the subject, and whether also, it does not evidence an unwillingness upon your part to approach the real merits of the question. You are quite mistaken, if you have supposed that I am to be drawn aside by an expedient so often adopted in controversy, but one which, in this case, is so palatable that nobody can mistake its design.—It is enough to say, that upon a proper occasion, I will hold myself ready to prove that all the quotations made from our standards, (one of which in particular is sadly misunderstood, besides be-

ing imperfectly given,) present not a single idea that is inconsistent with the perfect catholicity which I claim for them. And farther, as respects the *facts* to which I have appealed, I am fully prepared to prove how entirely you have misapprehended and misstated the actual relations that subsist between us and the various bodies of Christians, and especially between the two branches of the Presbyterian family, one of which you represent as "excommunicating" the other. It is quite enough to assure the reader that neither of these bodies so understands the matter, and that at the present moment moment their amicable relations illustrate the important truth, that there may be *separation without schism*, just as the present distracted state of your own denomination illustrates the opposite truth, that there may be *schism without separation*.

All these points, I say, are capable of the most satisfactory adjustment, but this is not the place for it. For, to what purpose, unless it be to entangle the question before us with irrelevant matters, weary the patience of the reader, and *avert the dreadful issue*—is all this hunting through the Presbyterian formularies? What even if you can prove, with the clearness of demonstration, that these formularies teach doctrines in regard to the ministry and sacrament, which are the same or akin to those you teach? What if you can convict me and all the Presbyterian body of the most palpable inconsistency with the principles of our own standards? I beg leave to ask whether this would refute in any wise the truth of the position I have taken in my fifth letter. I have said already that in this discussion I stand upon the ground common to all who acknowledge a ministry and ordinances. The question as to which of the forms of this ministry is most accordant with scripture teaching, and best fitted to secure the purity, efficiency, freedom and happiness of the Christian Church, is, in its place, an interesting question; but, I repeat, it is not the question before us. The question which is before us is, whether *any one* of the various forms of constituting the Church of Christ is essential to the very existence of that Church. To this question I again invite your attention, with the hope that you will see that my consistency or inconsistency has really nothing whatever to do with its settlement. As to the meaning of my own standards, I have no doubt that our readers will at once appreciate the justice of my claim to be considered as sound an interpreter of them as you can possibly be.—Besides which, did I need any farther argument to demonstrate that they do not take the arrogant ground of unchurching you or others who do not receive them, I find that argument in the acknowledged, the notorious fact that our practice is just what I described it, in my last letter. It is universally known that we do most cheerfully and in the emphatic language of *facts*, acknowledge the ministry and ordinances of other Christian Churches. I ask whether our *practice* be not the best exponent of our *principles*, and whether that practice is not conclusive that, (to use the language of our standards) "we embrace in the spirit of charity those Christians who differ from us in opinion or in practice," upon the subject of the precise forms of Church order.

I might go through the whole series of your quotations, and show conclusively that they teach no more than is believed and admitted by all the denominations of Christians who believe at all in the propriety and necessity of the ministry and ordinances of the Gospel. In this respect the denominations I have named stand upon common ground. They hold a ministry, an Apostolical ministry, and a divinely-appointed ministry.—But the fact of its being Apostolical and divinely-appointed is not, as I have already shown, made to depend upon the fact that it has come down to them in a regular, unbroken series of individuals, but upon the fact that it is substantially conformed to Apostolic practice, and that it is imbued with the Apostolic spirit. The call to it consists, primarily, in the possession of a sincere desire to advance the cause of evangelic truth and righteousness; secondly, in the possession of the requisite intellectual gifts and qualifications for this purpose; and thirdly, in the voice of the people, inviting the individual to exercise those qualifications in their behalf. *Ordination* is the public recognition of such an individual as the possessor of such a call, and does not invest him with any sacramental and mysterious virtues which he did not before possess. Every denomination, for the simple purpose of securing order, and preventing the intrusion among them of persons who give no proof of possessing such a call as the one just described, has made its own arrangements, as it has an undoubted right to do, provided its rules be in substantial and designed conformity with what they believe to be the principles and spirit of the Gospel. This is, in their sense of the words, *lawful ordination*, concerning which you say so much. If the reader of these letters wishes to see the subject fully and ably treated, I beg leave to recommend to his perusal the work of the present incumbent of the Archbishopric of Dublin, Dr. Whately, entitled "The Kingdom of Christ."

Enough now to repeat, that a succession of *individuals*, beginning with the Apostles and descending to the present times, does not, of itself, (as you affirm and as you are bound to prove,) make any set of functionaries an Apostolical or divinely appointed ministry, for reasons I gave in my last, and to which you have not replied.—Let us imagine the possibility that at the period when the Reformation shook the throne of the great spiritual despotism which had so long and wickedly usurped the holy name of the Catholic Church, not one of the prelates or priests of that vast incorporation of anti-Christian errors had come out of its bosom. Instead of a number of ordained *priests*, such as Luther, let us suppose some noble-hearted layman had had first lighted the flame of reform, and had gathered multitudes of Christians around the re-instated Word of God, would it not have been the right and duty of those believers to organize themselves as a Church of Jesus Christ, and to appoint and invest ministers to discharge ministerial duties for them? To deny this would be to say that that there is no remedy against essential error. You may reply that this is another extreme case, and that it should not be considered as establishing a *rule*; but it certainly establishes a principle, and that principle is the very one in debate, viz: that there may be, without a succession of individuals, a true,

evangelic, divinely appointed and lawfully ordained ministry of the Gospel. But I must refer the reader again to my last letter, as containing my views upon this point more at large, reserving farther and even more impressive considerations for the time when, abandoning all hope of farther evading the real issue, you shall have given your answer to my first Scriptural argument.

Let me then, state the true issue, once more. You have asserted—not merely that a ministry, and a divinely appointed ministry, is essential to the Church, but that it must be a *prelatical* ministry; so that without *prelacy* there is no Church, and of course (as I have shown and as your writers affirm,) a covenanted spiritual mercies and no warranted hope of Heaven. On the contrary I have denied that any one particular way of selecting and designating the persons who are to fill the office is *essential* to the existence of the Church. This is my *first* answer to the un-churching dogma. I pray you then come to this point, without any further attempt to show that you understand Presbyterianism better than I do myself. Come to it boldly, and prove, if you can, that it comports with the spirituality of the Gospel to exalt, as you do, a matter of external order into an essential.—Come to it, and explain why, if prelacy be a *vital* element in the Church of God, there has not been a uniformly divine and practical testimony given to it exclusively; so that none should be left in doubt that the blessing of God rested upon your ministrations only. Come to the point, and show (for you are bound to do so) that prelacy has invariably proved itself to be the only channel of spiritual benefits to mankind; that it alone has preserved the truth, and preached the truth, and exemplified the truth in the lives of its adherents; that it has promoted the peace and unity and purity of Christendom, so infinitely beyond any other system from which it has been discarded as to demonstrate, not only that it is right, but essential. In a word, come to the point, and prove that, like Gideon's fleece, the dews of the grace of Heaven have fallen only upon prelatical Rome, prelatical Austria, prelatical Russia, prelatical England and America, while the rest of Christendom is perishing in drought.

Prove these things, and your claims are established. We will then no longer question the modesty of your monopoly of the name and rights of the Christian Church. You may then call your comparatively contracted denomination *THE CHURCH*, and yourself, *par excellence*, *CHURCHMEN*. Nay, a prelate may propose, (as I understand one has actually done,) to drop the words '*Protestant Episcopal*' from your style and title, and you may publish a list of your prelates in the '*Dioceses of the Church of the United States*.*' In a word, prove that 'there can be a Church without a prelate,' and I pledge myself that we will one and all bring—what one of your number has called—our *forged commissions*, and lay them at your feet.

But until then be assured that your claims will be none the more readily conceded because they are loudly asserted; on the contrary, every open assault, like that which originated this discussion,

* See the Church Almanac for 1844, published by the Episcopal Tract Society, President, Right Rev. B. U. Onderdonk.

will be met with promptness and repelled. If your hands are found to be against every man, do not wonder that every man's hand will be against you. Self-respect and the desire to maintain an unimpeached character as the basis of our usefulness, enjoin the duty of self-defence.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,
GEORGE POTTS.

LETTER XV.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

Rev. and Dear Sir—I am constrained to call the attention of our readers particularly to the conclusion of my last letter, which is as follows: "Do you or do you not believe that you can, consistently with your standards, with the teachings of your accredited writers, and the most eminent living doctors of your Church, affirm that a minister can be lawfully commissioned otherwise than by *external ordination by other ministers, who have themselves been externally ordained?*"

I had little expectation that you would answer the foregoing interrogatory, for I knew, and doubtless our readers perceived, that any answer *true to its point* would involve you in serious difficulty. Should you answer in the affirmative, you must abandon the principles of your own Church. Should you answer in the negative, you must abandon your own proposition, viz. "that there is no warrant from Scripture for making any particular external form of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship and communion with God which are the distinguishing duties and privileges of the Church of Christ."

You therefore did not find it expedient to answer the question—but instead of doing so ran off into various disquisitions, interspersed with your accustomed vague charges against me—denunciations of my Church—historical sketches of the rise and progress of the present controversy—assertions about unduly exalting forms, &c. The public, I trust, will not be misled. They have seen the force of the argument from your standards. They have seen the point of my interrogatory, and its direct bearing as an *argumentum ad hominem* upon your proposition.—They know why you did not answer it, and they will judge between us whether your most adventurous assertion, that I had in my last letter endeavored to evade your argument, is well founded or not.

When you volunteered in this controversy you took your ground against me as being an Episcopalian. I, on the other hand, accepted your challenge as from a Presbyterian. I had a right to suppose, therefore, that we should each be true to our own standards, and carry on our controversy under their sacred and binding authority. I had pledged conformity to mine, in the same spirit as I do not doubt you did to yours when you gave an affirmative reply to the question, "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confession of faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." *Form of Gov. of the Pres. Chh.* Chap. XV. Sec. XII.

When therefore in your *fifth* letter you advanced your *first* argument in support of the affirmative proposition, I met it fairly and directly. My course of argument was this—(the public, I

trust, will understand it and feel its weight, if you do not)—I showed that the Presbyterian Church *did* “make a particular external form of polity a condition of that Christian fellowship,” &c. I quoted the standards of that Church—I sustained their doctrine by references to scripture and by comment. I adopted this doctrine, as far it goes, and assumed it as my own. To all this you offer not a single refutation, nor any thing that to my apprehension approaches to one.

You say “that upon a proper occasion you will hold yourself ready to prove,” &c. You say what you could do, what you might do, and what on some future occasion perhaps you will do, to show that “Presbyterian formularies teach no more than is believed and admitted by all the denominations of Christians who believe at all in the propriety and necessity of the ministry and ordinances of the gospel.” But you have not done this, or attempted to do it, and permit me to add, with all due respect, my firm conviction is that you *cannot* do it. Your standards, at any rate, do teach more upon the subject of the ministry than is held by Friends, Congregationalists or Baptists; and although you more than once suggest to our readers that you must be a better judge of the meaning of your formularies than I am, (and although this may have a certain effect with persons for whom I do not write,) I am confident that the intelligent and candid of your own communion will say that when I appeal from you to your own accredited doctors in regard to the meaning of your standards, the appeal deserves to be tried.

Now here I must solicit your special attention and the reader's patience, for the question presenting itself is of the utmost importance. It lies at the foundation of all this controversy. If the principle I contend for is not sustained by the most cogent and satisfactory arguments I need go no farther. If a divinely appointed Apostolical ministry—I mean too in the sense of the Episcopal and Presbyterian standards, and I affirm that on this point they agree—is not essential to the Church—then Prelates are not essential—then the question of Apostolical succession is as unimportant as can well be imagined. Therefore it is that I press this point home upon you, and demand a categorical answer to the question which concluded my last letter, and which I repeat in this. If you can answer in the affirmative and sustain your affirmation, or in other words if you can support your first argument, that “there is no warrant from scripture for making any particular external form of polity a condition” &c., then you knock down your own ecclesiastical mansion about your ears, and with the same blow you demolish the Divine right of Episcopacy. But you have not done this, and I repeat my firm belief that you cannot do it.

Now we must have a clear understanding upon this point, and the public must have a clear understanding upon it. And it is for want of this clear understanding that the progress of our argument has been retarded. And as you intimate that the delay has been owing to me, I am compelled to retort upon you, and affirm that this unsatisfactory slow dragging of the argument is wholly chargeable upon you. Answer affirmatively or negatively to the question of my last let-

ter, repeated in this. If affirmatively, then you are a Congregationalist and I leave you in the hands of the Presbyterians, to battle with them the question of a divinely appointed ministry. If negatively then your first argument is demolished and you must build up another.

But you may say—you do say—that you “hold to a ministry, an Apostolical ministry, a divinely appointed ministry.” How do you hold to this position? That is the question. You say, because “it depends upon the fact that it is substantially conformed to Apostolical practice, and that it is imbued with the Apostolical spirit.” And you go on—“The call to it consists primarily in the possession of a sincere desire to advance the cause of evangelic truth and righteousness; secondly in the possession of the requisite intellectual gifts and qualifications for this purpose; and thirdly in the voice of the people inviting the individual to exercise those qualifications in their behalf. Ordination is the public recognition of such an individual as the possessor of such a call, and does not invest him with any sacramental and mysterious virtues which he did not before possess.” Is it possible that in your estimation this is the whole force, intention and efficacy of ordination? The Presbyterian standards say that it is a *calling of God, as Aaron was called of God*. No, says Dr. Potts, it is simply “a public recognition.” A newspaper paragraph duly signed by the proper person would be “a public recognition.” Would this be an ordination? A hand-bill at the corner of the streets in like manner “a public recognition.” In what heresy that ever cursed the earth have not the leaders been favored with “a public recognition” by their adherents? And is this equivalent to ordination, to the “laying on of the hands of the Presbytery?”

I affirm and you cannot deny that the Presbyterian standards teach that neither ‘the inward call,’ ‘nor intellectual gifts and qualifications’ (this is the Quaker doctrine) nor ‘the voice of the people inviting to exercise their qualifications, in their behalf,’ (this is the Congregational doctrine,) constitute a gospel minister; and that ordination is not merely ‘the public recognition of such an individual as the possessor of such a call,’ (this is the whole import of Congregational ordination,) but that ordination does invest the individual with an authority which he did not before possess, and which he could possess solely and exclusively by the laying on of the hands of other ministers, who have themselves been externally ordained.—(And this is the Presbyterian doctrine.)

That this is the Presbyterian doctrine I will not attempt to strengthen the proof by quoting more largely from your standards, than I have done in my last letter, lest I should fatigue our readers, but I will refer to what may be of some interest to them, and what will greatly fortify my position. I will refer to the doings of the General Assembly held in June last.

This very point now between us then came up, and was fully discussed, on the question of the rights of ruling elders to impose hands at ordination. On one side it was argued that they had the right, on the ground that “they were members of the Presbytery, and ordination was to be by the laying on of the hands of the Pres-

tytery." On the other side it was contended that they had no such authority, inasmuch as "ministerial acts could be performed only by ministers." "Ministers were the representatives of the head of the Church, the elders the representatives of the body." "The ministers are Christ's representatives, the elders the Church's. We have here then the two elements of office—election by the people through their representatives the elders, and ordination by Christ through his representatives or ministers." "And what power does the Church give him (i. e. the ruling elder)? Not the power of ordination, for the Church herself, aside from the ministry, does not possess that power. Independents sometimes ordain without preaching elders, but that is not Presbyterianism. And here is the very point in question. The Church has power to deliberate, advise and decide, but not to impose hands. This significant act of very ancient origin is an emblem of the transfer of ministerial power. But the Church is not the depository of this power, and therefore she cannot delegate it to her representative." These were some of the arguments used, and sound arguments they were, and they prevailed, and they were sustained by your General Assembly, by the following overwhelming vote:

Yeas.....	134	Excused.....	2
Nays.....	8	Absent.....	16
Total.....	159*		

Whether Dr. Potts was a member of this Assembly, or whether he was among the yeas, nays, excused, or absent, I am not informed—nor is it material to know. Such was the decision of his Church, and the decision was in conformity with its standards, and its standards and this decision recognize a principle which I believe to be scriptural, and therefore accord with it, and I advance it as containing my negative, and the reasons for my negative, to his first argument, "there is no warrant from the word of God for making any particular external form of polity a condition," &c. And I submit to the public whether I have not, (by the aid of his own standards, I acknowledge,) overthrown his argument. If not, let him show upon what foundation it yet rests. If upon any that is valid and firm, then, as I have before said, there is no need of any farther discussion—for if an Apostolical, divinely appointed ministry, in the sense I have contended for it, is not essential to the Church, Presbyterian ordination is not essential, and *a fortiori* Episcopal ordination is not essential, and to argue for Apostolical succession would be worse than vain.

In view of the above argument let the public decide who has embarrassed this discussion by confused views, contradictory statements, inconclusive arguments, and declamation having no real bearing upon the question at issue. Do not take this remark, I pray you, in an offensive light. I should deprecate offering it in this light. I present it in self-defence—to shield myself from the accusation which you have repeatedly made, and which you seem anxious to impress upon the public, that I am trying "to avert the dreaded issue."

Now, sir, in concluding this part of my letter, let me sum up and ask the public to judge between us.

Your first argument, in proof that my assertion concerning Episcopacy is *unscriptural*, is contained in the following allegation: "There is no warrant from scripture for making any particular external form of polity a condition," &c. Which allegation, if it be at all to the point, is the same as alleging that there is no warrant from scripture for making any particular form of polity essential to the being of a Church.

I maintain that I met it directly and fairly.—You, indeed, with admirable appreciation of our logical relations to each other, desired me to *disprove* your allegation. Of course I preferred that you should *prove* it first. It was enough for me to deny it. I deny it still. Will you prove it? Or, will you answer the question I have propounded in relation to ordination?

You have manifested great sensitiveness throughout our correspondence in regard to what you call the arrogance of Episcopalians, and I have been particularly surprised at the concluding paragraph of your last letter. You speak of "open assault, like that which originated this discussion," (I deny again that any assault of mine did originate this discussion, and deny it in the sense I have sufficiently explained,)—of "our hands being against every man," and, therefore, in the spirit of Christian retaliation, "your hands are to be against us"—of "self-respect"—and an "unimpeached character" to be maintained. These words imply grave charges. Who has assaulted you? Who has impeached your character? Who has wounded your self-respect? Who has denied that you are a Presbyterian minister—the popular pastor of a highly respectable congregation? Who has denied your right to administer the affairs of your own congregation and your own Church in your own way? Who has interfered, or wished to interfere, with your liberty in Christ to worship in your own way—to preach the doctrines you believe to be true—to administer the sacraments you believe to be Christ's sacraments? And because we choose to assert and maintain our liberty in Christ in these matters, and to read and interpret God's word according to the best light we have, and in view of our solemn responsibilities to be judged at the last day for the use we have made of this word, common to us all, are we to be accused of arrogance and uncharitableness, and to have all other offensive epithets heaped upon us? Permit me to say that all this excitement on your part is uncalled for. I maintain a certain doctrine because I believe it to be taught in God's word. If you can convince me, as you have undertaken to do, that it is not there taught, I will at once relinquish it. But if I maintain it without interfering, or wishing to interfere, with your civil, social or religious rights, and without indulging the language of denunciation, (and if you will point out to me any such language that I have used, on *any occasion whatsoever*, I will recal it and apologize for it,) you have no cause to feel yourself aggrieved.

I have now to say a few words on your oft-repeated charge about 'exclusiveness,' 'unchurching,' &c.

I have hitherto been contented with showing from your standards that, however just in itself this charge might be, it cannot with propriety be preferred by any Presbyterian minister who ad-

heres to his own scheme of doctrine. I now, however, go farther—and solemnly deny the charge, I am not “exclusive.” I “unchurch” no man in the sense which you attach to these terms. I consign no fellow-creature to those “uncovenanted mercies” which, according to your views of Christian truth, you very properly say are “no mercies at all.” Herein consists your mistake, and I ask our readers to look at it closely.

The maxim “*nulla ecclesia sine episcopo*” is an ancient maxim of the Church catholic, and it is to be interpreted and understood according to the great principles whereby the Church represents upon the earth the Universal Father’s mercy toward all his guilty and suffering children.—But you have withdrawn it from its home and its true interpreter, and have read it to the world and commented on it, not by the aid of catholic charity and truth, but in the light of the narrow system of Geneva. Your views of the “Church” and of the “covenant” and of God’s mercy to the human race may be gathered from the following dogmas:

Confession of Faith, Chap. XXV.—The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Confession of Faith, Chap. III. Sec. III.—By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are fore-ordained to everlasting death.

IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God has appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his spirit working in due season: are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

VII. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

Confession of Faith Chap. X.

Section I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds, spiritually and awfully, to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

II. This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace, alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

III. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, but they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of Nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may be very pernicious, and to be detested.

In the light of such a system as this it is that

you have undertaken to interpret my maxim, and have lifted your hands in horror at its import when thus interpreted.

You of course limit the “Church and the “covenant” and *the possibility of salvation*, to the “elect,” that is, to *that specific number of adults and infants whom God, according to his eternal purpose, hath predestinated unto life and hath chosen in Christ, without any foresight of faith or good works, or any thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto*. Consequently you regard my dogma as with awful presumption laying its hand upon the Divine decrees, defining their course, designating their subjects among the children of men, and impiously determining that every community without a Bishop at its head is not of the “elect,” but consists only of vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction.

But no, sir, this maxim “no Church without a Bishop” is not yours—you cannot interpret it. Its birth place is not Geneva—its home is not there. It belongs to the system of free grace and of salvation within *the reach of all*. It abides in the great temple of him who died for all—the gates of which are open continually and open to every man—to which no man is admitted, and from which no man is excluded, by any unconditional decree of the Almighty. And as the parent, obeying his Savior’s invitation, is carrying his little children to baptism, he is not tortured by doubt and fear, lest after all, his offspring not being of the number of “elect infants,” the ordinance may be in vain, and his affectionate care for their Christian nurture, and his watchings and prayers and tears, be returned to his desolate and despairing heart by a restless and unconditional decree, recorded in the clouds and darkness above him. He knows, and is sure, that in the laver of regeneration his little ones are made “members of Christ, children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.” And he knows also that their attainment of the full maturity of the Christian life, or their failure to attain it, depends, through the grace of God, not in *appearance merely* but really and truly, upon the manner in which he and they sustain their responsibility as free moral agents.

A membership of the visible Church is ordinarily necessary to salvation. In a Christian land, however, men are not ordinarily out of the Church but through their own fault—and for this they are of course responsible in proportion to the wilfulness of the fault. If in Christian, as is the case in heathen lands, many should be out of the Church not through any fault of their own, we know of no authority given to man to pronounce their condemnation. We do not believe that the fact of their being out of the Church is a sign that God has by a secret decree “passed them by,” or, which is the same thing, appointed them unto perdition. We commend them in faith and hope to the mercies, in our view the all embracing mercies, of our Heavenly Father.

Were it true, then, that we “unchurch” all who do not acknowledge and receive the organization of the Church as we believe we have received it from Christ, we should regard those only as in a state of condemnation who reject the truth of Christ wilfully, through evil dispositions—i. e. knowing or having the opportunities of

knowing it to be the *truth of Christ*, and rejecting it *as such*. While unchurching others not thus wilfully rejecting the truth we should not condemn—not believing the being out of the Church to be a necessary sign of perdition, as it is in the system of Geneva. We do not “unchurch” men, however, quite so recklessly as my opponent seems to imagine. We “unchurch” no man—we banish no man from our communion, who has been lawfully baptised, and holds the essential faith; who leads a Godly and a Christian life, and who is not, *wilfully and knowingly*, a schismatic.

It is true that we believe in one only visible Church of Christ. We believe that it is unchangeably constituted and organized by Christ himself. We believe that it will continue one to the end of the world. And we do not believe that the various communities around us, which have sprung up at different times within the last three hundred years, and which continue to spring up every year, calling themselves Churches, are so in fact. They are without Christ's organization and ministry. Their organization and ministry are recent—of yesterday. Whereas Christ organized his Church eighteen hundred years ago. But while we thus deny to these communities in the *aggregate* the name and character of Churches, and while we regard them as in a *state of schism*, we yet believe, so far as the *individuals* belonging to those communities are concerned, that the *guilt of schism* depends upon the circumstances of each particular case. And we do not decide that those individual members may not, by virtue of their baptism and their Christian faith and virtue, be still connected, though in imperfect communion, with the Church of Christ.

Though in their corporate capacity we refuse to acknowledge them as Churches, and we deem them not lawfully organized, in respect to individuals, we do not refuse to commune with them as members of the Church. Were your temple of worship to be suddenly destroyed by fire on some communion day, yourself and your whole body of communicants would be received, I venture to say, with the utmost Christian hospitality, in any Episcopal Church in this city, or in the land, and would be welcomed to partake with us of the Holy Communion. Cease, then, I pray you, attempting to bring this undeserved odium upon a whole denomination of your fellow Christians, and bear with the only rebuke I will utter for the attempt—“Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth.”

Now, from what has been said in this latter part of my letter, it appears—

I. That we are not “exclusive” in your sense of the word, or in the sense in which your scheme of doctrine makes the Church exclusive.

II. That to “unchurch” men is not, necessarily, as it is according to your system, to consign them to perdition.

III. That while we deny to the recently organized communities around us, in the aggregate, the name and character of Churches, we do not deny that the Christian baptism and faith of the *individuals* embraced in these communities may

connect them though in imperfect communion, with the one visible Church of Christ.

IV. That all your various charges of “exclusiveness,” “uncharitableness,” “unchurching,” &c., are unfounded and unjust, and that you have been led into this injustice by your attempt to interpret a maxim of the Church catholic, eighteen hundred years old, in the light of the system which was fabricated at Geneva three hundred years ago.

I have the honor to be, Rev. and dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

30th January, 1844.

LETTER XVI.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT:

Rev. and Dear Sir: Our readers, no doubt, have shared with me in my disappointment, at not finding some reference to Calvin and Servetus in your last letter, especially as you trod so closely upon this favorite topic, and as it has quite as powerful a bearing upon the point of exclusive High-Churchism, as the topic of predestination and election. There are some kinds of argumentation which are quite beyond the reach of a *serious* reply; they move the gravest people to indulge in a little harmless mirth. When we consider how admirably inconsequent they are, we find it much more difficult to keep our countenances than to keep our tempers. Of this sort is your argument in favor of High-Church exclusiveness, drawn from the obnoxious doctrines of predestination. There are several other topics, equally pertinent, which I beg leave to suggest for future use, that may serve to amuse, if not to convince. When drawn up, in syllogistic form, they are very striking. One I have just mentioned: Calvin burned Servetus—*therefore*, no Presbyterian can say a word against High-Church monopoly. Or this:—the non-conformists in England were round-heads, who sang psalms through their noses—*therefore*, no Presbyterian can say a word against being unchurched. Or this:—the Puritans of New-England always burned witches, always persecuted the Quakers, made blue laws, declared that the whole earth belonged to the Saints, &c. &c. &c.—*therefore*, no Presbyterian can call in question the charity, modesty and justice of the unchurching dogma.

But even should you take occasion to resort to these or similar specimens of logic, they will not draw me aside from the point in hand. “A time for every thing.” They are just as germane to the true issue as the question of Millerism or Mesmerism, upon both of which points, perhaps, your opponent may be, for all you know, a fanatic.—Were I a believer even in the theory of Lord Monboddo, according to which mankind were originally provided with those caudal appendages vulgarly called tails, that would hardly be a pertinent reply to certain arguments I might adduce to prove that Prelacy is not the indispensable connecting link between the grace of God and the life of the Church. I may believe, with the great apostle, that for reasons inscrutable to us, the wise, good and just God may and actually does “*make men to differ*,” but surely this does not imply that either myself or you should, of our own motion, be allowed to *play the Sovereign* among Christian Churches, and elect some and shut out others,

upon such futile grounds as that they do not agree with us in our respective notions as to Church order. This is the claim I am resisting, and which I would resist as firmly, were it advanced by a Presbyterian or Congregationalist, as I now do, when it is advanced by a Prelatist. It is not Prelacy, but *exclusive* Prelacy, *monopolizing* Prelacy, that we are now concerned with.

When we have settled this point I will be ready to meet you, and to vindicate rational views upon any of the doctrinal points which are to be found in our standards, and this among them. I will be glad of an opportunity of showing that we hold *all* infants to be elect, and therefore saved, by the grace of Christ, in which respect we differ from you, who make baptism indispensable to their regeneration, and thus to their salvation. And in reference to all mankind, I will undertake to show that neither the quotations you have made from the Westminster confession, nor the 17th article of your own Church, nor the well-known views of the English Reformers, nor the equally well-known views of many of your ablest Prelates of past and present times, militate in any degree against a free Gospel and a large charity. All this I pledge myself to do, if you will hereafter consent to meet me. In the meantime I will dismiss the subject, by delicately hinting that the next time you may wish to deal a blow at an opponent, you would do well to select a weapon which in some of its flourishings will not cut off the heads of many of your own brethren, and strike down one of the articles of your own creed. That I am not making a mere insinuation, destitute of any basis, I refer the reader to the 17th article of your creed, which I give in a note.*

The argument in your last, so far as it touches the point at all, is but a repetition of the former strain. To use a homely comparison, in using which I mean no offence, you find yourself in the condition of the animal in the fable which had lost his brush, and would fain persuade others to put themselves in the same condition. Nay you insist upon it that I am actually in the same condition with yourself, on the question of unchurching. But *fact* contradicts this. When you can point to an instance in which your opponents have

* Art. XVII. Of Predestination and election.

Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit, working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of Predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love toward God: so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the Sentence of God's Predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the Devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in holy Scripture: And in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God.

re-baptized or re-ordained any one coming from other Christian denominations, I give you leave to hold up my bigotry and inconstancy to scorn. When you can show that one of your number has partaken of the symbols of communion at the hands of Christian ministers who do not admit the absolute necessity of Prelacy—when you can produce an instance of among us, similar to one among you, in which a modest High-Churchman (speaking of a minister his equal, aye his superior in every quality that constitutes moral and intellectual dignity,) said of him, "He has no more right to preach the gospel than that dog"—when you can find among us an individual who has gone so far as to call in question your right even to celebrate marriage—when you can show that we have called ourselves with offensive presumption, The Church, and have even gone to the Legislature of the State, as you have done, to ask for the incorporation of a society under this exclusive title, "*The Church Mariners' Society*"—when you can show, from the pages of any author recognized among us, such claims for their own precise order as I can show upon the pages of Dodwell and Palmer, and Hook and Hobart, and a host of others, who go far to make *prelacy* or *perdition* the alternative—then I will admit that High-Church pretensions do not assail the character and usefulness of those who differ from you.

You deny that you have thus assailed their character and usefulness. I consider my character assailed when I am met on all hands with the insulting assertion which virtually amounts to this—"Sir, you are a sham minister; yours is a sham Church; yours are forged credentials; you have no right to preach the Gospel." It is no fault of High Church pretension, if you cannot persuade the world to believe these things. But should you succeed in persuading them, I ask whether our usefulness to society would not at once be destroyed. This is what I mean when I say that self-respect, and self-defence, and the good of the world, all demand a resistance of the assertion that *there can be no Church without a Prelate*. I have shown the legitimate consequences of this position; I have shown the sense in which it is understood by the world, and by your own writers. If you now start back from these consequences, it is because they are odious to others, and therefore injurious to yourselves—and not because they are not logically derived from your position. You say you do not give over all other denominations to uncovenanted mercies. Are the covenant mercies of God then equally shared by those who are *in* and those who are *out* of the Church? If you admit this, you do indeed give up the point, and take back your unchurching dogma, and the debate may cease. Again, you say you would welcome to your communion myself and the communicants of our Church, if driven from what you call our '*temple of worship*,' by fire. Yes, doubtless, but it would be only because, by accepting your proffered hospitality, we should be virtually admitting that we were Prelatists for the occasion.—How we could go to partake of a hospitality so invidious, and so hedged round with provisos and conditions, as for instance that we must be first '*lawfully baptized*,' and not '*wilfully and knowingly schismatics*'—is another question.—

Hospitality is not worthy of the name, which is not reciprocated. Let me put the question:—Would you come to us, and sit down with us at the table of our common Lord, should *your* 'temple of worship' be consumed by fire? Unless you can answer this question in the affirmative, I hand you back your modicum of charity and hospitality, until it is so far increased as to make an acceptance of it compatible with a decent self-respect. Again, you pronounce the Churches of the Reformation to be no Churches, and yet say you do not unchurch those who belong to them. Let who can, reconcile this unchurching of *aggregates* with a churching of the *individuals* who compose the aggregates. No, sir; with all your distinctions, intended as loop-holes for the escape of charity, your position is unchanged; you do claim, and claim as the exclusive property of Roman and Anglican Prelatists, the name, the authority, the immunities, the sacraments, the rights and blessings of the visible Church of Christ. And I again call upon you to let the world have the evidence of this claim; the astounding consequences of which are such as to require evidence little short of demonstration to justify them.

I now proceed more immediately to the point before us, and to which I have not yet succeeded in bringing you. If our readers will be patient, I promise to be patient myself, in the hope that the true issue cannot be much longer postponed.

You seem to think that a certain query, which closes your last letter but one, contains something so formidable to my argument that I purposely avoided any notice of it. This is quite a mistake. I cannot perceive, in the question referred to, any Scylla and Charybdis, any sunken rocks, through which I feared to pass. In what I have already offered, the question had been answered again and again. It is in fact the very question in debate, viz: *the necessary succession of individuals*. If you require farther satisfaction upon this point, I hope my succeeding remarks will furnish it.

A ministry, a divinely appointed ministry, a ministry to the exercise of the duties of which there should be God's call, which call I defined to consist in certain internal and external signs, such as God's grace, and God's Providence can alone bestow upon any one;—such a ministry, I believe, enters into the very idea of a Church, besides being distinctly recognized in the Word of God.

Now, I maintain that with such a call one is as really "*called of God as was Aaron*," for I take it for granted that no man of common sense will see, in this passage to which you have so often referred, any thing more than that every particular individual, before his assumption of the ministerial office, should be guided by *some* divine directions. Aaron and his sons were called by a *direct call from God given to Moses* in express terms. Do you mean that it is by such a call as this, that your Prelates, priests and deacons are summoned to their places? In this sense, are they "called of God as was Aaron?" Taking for granted that none have yet reached the point of claiming, in behalf of the ministry, an *inspired* appointment of each individual, such as that of Aaron, there is nothing more in the text referred to than an in-

culcation of the duty of seeking the Divine direction in every way reasonable and possible at the present time. Such a divine direction consists, as I have already said, (1) in strong and pious desires to honor our master in the preaching of the Gospel,—(2) in the possession of the requisite endowments, and (3) in the invitation of the Church, (embracing the ministry and the people,) calling the individual to the exercise of his gifts.

Where, then, does this discussion rub? At what point do your route and mine diverge?—Just here, in the first instance: that you make the very existence of the ministry, and of course the validity of its functions, depend *necessarily, and in all supposable cases*, upon its descent through an unbroken line of *persons*, along which line alone can be conveyed what some have called "Episcopal grace." In other words, you affirm an unbroken chain of *ministers*—we affirm a perpetuated *ministry*; yours is a succession of *men*, ours a succession of *truth*; you insist upon the *officers*, we upon the *office*. Instead of following your remarks through all their windings—which would be labor thrown away—I am only anxious to set our opposite *principles* clearly before the reader's view. For this purpose, I beg your and his attention to an illustration. It shall be taken from the very sentence in Mr. Choate's noble oration which occasioned your utterance of the unchurching dogma. "*A State without a King—a Church without a Prelate*:" a sentence which I hope will be long remembered.

Now you have undertaken to deny the truth contained in the latter half of this sentence, and have affirmed, not that there may a Church *with* Prelates, (which I freely admit) but that there can be no Church *without* them. I shall endeavor to show that you might, with equal justice, have called the other truth in question, and have undertaken to prove, not that there may be a State *with* a King, but that there cannot be a State *without* one. To my apprehension, it would have been quite edifying and agreeable to the sturdy republicans at the New-England festival, if her Majesty's consul, had he chanced to be present, had followed Dr. Wainwright's challenge of the one position, by a similar challenge of the other. But this by the way! The point of my present remark is, that such a challenge would have been equally just, and for the following reasons.

Even admitting (what I am by no means disposed to admit except for argument's sake,) that *Prelacy* is distinctly recognized in Scripture as the existing form of the Christian Church at that day, it is not surely *more* distinctly recognized than *monarchy* is, as the then existing form of civil government. "*Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*;" "*Honor the King; The powers that be are ordained of God*," says inspired authority. I may remark, in passing, that when you can show as good a proof text for *exclusive* assumptions in the Church, as these and some others which the advocates of the exclusive Divine right of *kings* can show, I shall be disposed to think much better of the modesty of those assumptions. Supposing, however, that an equally pointed recognition of *Prelacy* can be shown, as that which the believers in *monarchy* appeal to—would it justify you in making it, as

you do make it, absolutely and without any exception, *essential* to the very being of the Church? Is there no room to be allowed for mistake—no ground for the possible supposition that Prelacy, like monarchy, might be dropped to suit circumstances, and yet not actually destroy the Church, and leave it without God's blessing? If some should affirm that there is so strong an affinity between Prelacy and monarchy that they should go together, (and this seemed to be the belief of King James I—whose hatred for Presbyterianism often found vent in his favorite maxim, "No Bishop, no King,") and if others should affirm that a republic in the state requires a republic in the Church; and if upon these principles they should severally agree to arrange the order of Church government—the question occurs whether either of these classes of persons could by justly charged by the other with the guilt of absolutely subverting the Church.

Now in respect to both the Church and the state, both of them institutes distinctly recognized in the Bible, I boldly affirm (and I pray you observe that this is the substance of my first argument, which you have not so much as touched,) that *the Bible does not make a particular form of either indispensable to the existence of either.* The passages I have referred to, upon which a staunch High-Churchman in England would build the exclusive divine right of Queen Victoria, do not, as you will admit, justify such a consequence. If they did, then was our revolution rebellion, and our present existence is a continued rebellion against a constitution which God has appointed. Will you take this consequence? If not, why? The word of God no where recognizes a popular government in the state. There is no mention there of a President, chosen by the popular voice. On the contrary the authority looks altogether the other way.

What then? What reply will you make to the Scriptural argument for the exclusive divine right of Kings? Precisely this, which I make to your claim of the exclusive Divine right of Prelates; that the office-bearers of the State are not the essence of the State—that God has divinely appointed *Government*, but has not prescribed any precise details of Government or the mode of constituting *Governors*—that He has enjoined civil law and obedience to civil law, but has not enjoined that the law-makers shall be hereditary monarchs, whose authority is derived from their predecessors, and theirs again from other predecessors in an unbroken *monarchical succession*, akin to your *apostolical succession*—in one word, that there may be a state, divinely authorized by His province—a state meeting all the substantial requirements of civil Government—a state with competent officers—and yet a state *without a King*.

The analogy might be indefinitely pursued, were this the time—it is perfect. God has appointed a government in his Church—he has established a ministry—he has warranted the appointment of agents to carry out the necessary purposes of a Church relation. Up to this point we agree—but at this point, as I have said, we diverge. You are not willing to allow of a diversity of judgment as to the appointment and induction of these agents, but actually make it essen-

tial that they should, in *every* case, become possessed of their rights by a sort of *hereditary* and unbroken descent. This is your theory of exclusive legitimacy, and, as I have shown, it finds its counterpart in the monarchical legitimacy of the old world, judged by which the government of the United States is not a government at all; and has none of the rights, and none of the duties of a government. Upon this principle, we are bound to renounce our constitution, and at once fall back upon the principle of a *succession*, by submitting ourselves to the Queen of America.

But as it will be some time before the people of this land can be brought to this conclusion as to the state, so I am sure it will be some time before they can admit the conclusion as to your Church, or any other individual Church. Just as in the state, there were abundant reasons for the rejection of the empire of Great Britain, and for a reorganization of a *new* government growing out of the great charter of human rights which lies aback of all governments, so in the church, when a necessity exists, Christians may fall back upon the great charter of religious truth, the Bible, abandon an old and intolerable tyranny, and reorganize themselves as a Church of Christ.

And farther, as in the State, when reorganized, the necessity of officers, and the necessity of appointing and inducting them according to some established rule, will be apparent, so in the Church, when reorganized, the same necessity will originate rules more or less accordant with truth and justice. And this is the sense in which you are to understand all the rules in regard to the appointment and induction of a ministry which you find in the several formularies of the reformed churches.

You came out of the Roman hierarchy, somewhat later than the Churches on the Continent; so far as that hierarchy could, it deprived all the reformed bodies of their ecclesiastical rights. They did not heed this, but quietly proceeded to exercise the rights inherent in Christian believers, and of which no excommunication can deprive them, and to organize themselves into Christian Churches.

By considering these statements, the reader will see that insuperable objections must lie against the figment of which you make so much, (but which you have not yet attempted to prove,) the necessity of a *succession of individuals* in order to the existence of a lawful government and a lawful ministry in the Church. I bring you back again to this point. I am quite sure that you have seen along that it is *the turning point*, and considering the insuperable difficulties by which it is beset, I am not surprised that you are unwilling to confront them. You claim such a succession, as the very basis upon which alone the unchurching dogma can possibly rest. I deny that Scripture prescribes it as invariably necessary, and have again and again called for the proof. The burden of proof lies on you. Hoping that you will feel that you are now hedged in, and reminding you that, in order to justify your bold tone and prove a tenet which carries with it such astounding results, you must produce the most undoubted evidence, I beg leave to say in conclusion that you are called upon to prove your point,

by establishing the three following propositions :

I. That Scripture imperatively requires an uninterrupted succession of individuals, in order to the validity of ministerial character and acts.

II. That this succession must necessarily run in the line of diocesan Bishops ; and after establishing these two propositions, then

III. That you can claim such a succession for your ministry, so that not a link of the chain shall be wanting ; and, considering what powers you claim for your ministry, (upon which point I will hereafter make some developements,) and considering also the grounds upon which you claim those powers, you must not leave the shadow of a doubt as to your possession of this famous Apostolical succession.

After you have given your views upon these points, I shall have more to say.

Respectfully, your ob't ser't, GEORGE POTTS.
FEBRUARY 2, 1844.

LETTER XVII.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—I am quite as well aware as you can be how much of my last letter is strictly pertinent to the question now between us, whether Episcopacy is exclusively the Divine constitution of the Church, but I do not admit that any of it is irrelevant to the mode in which you have from the commencement conducted the discussion. This is a point, however, which I am perfectly content to submit to the decision of our readers—simply begging them to remember that I am the respondent in this debate, and therefore in a measure compelled to await your movements, and to follow the course of argument you may adopt.

You have spoken more than once of my seeking to “avert the dreaded issue,” and have called upon me, with what courtesy of tone and manner I will leave others to judge, to “come to it,” to “come to it boldly,” and to “prove” this and that. Now, sir, permit me to say that you entirely forget yourself, and lose sight of your true position, when you use this language.

You talk of bringing me to the point. So far from seeking to evade the point, my sole object has been to bring you to it. Not until you had put forth your *FIRST* letter did I succeed in bringing you to advance one single step toward establishing the proposition you undertook to demonstrate, namely, that the doctrine of the necessity of Episcopacy to the constitution of the Church of Christ is *unscriptural*, &c. &c.

You then advanced what you called your *FIRST* ARGUMENT, in form as follows :

“I. Because there is no warrant from the Word of God for making *any* particular external form of polity a condition,” &c.

Now obviously this allegation contains no *argument*, unless the matter alleged be true. You boldly affirm that it is true. I pray you to consider that your affirmation does not necessarily make it true. I have denied your allegation,—I still deny it. It belongs to you, therefore, to prove it. This you have not done, nor have you advanced a single step toward doing it. So far, then, as concerns the question between us, *your “first argument” is as yet no argument at all* ;

it is a solitary, unsupported assertion of yours, which I have denied.

You indeed called upon me to disprove your assertion, and although I was not under any obligation to disprove what you were first bound to *prove*, I did, as I maintain, fully and fairly disprove it out of your own standards, and by the judicial action of your own General Assembly, supported by the authority of Scripture.

You still repeat this same call. I am sorry to be obliged to remind you again how illogical, not to say absurd, this demand of yours will be, even if I had done nothing more than simply deny your assertion. But it is due to my own character, both for moral fairness and logical accuracy, to vindicate myself against your reiterated charges of not coming “to the point,” “dreading the issue,” &c. I wish our readers, therefore, to bear with me while in a few words I endeavor, for the *last* time, to justify myself for the course of argument I have taken.

1. In the first place, then, I beg them to remember that you advanced an assertion and called upon me to *DISPROVE* it! Surely, sir, you cannot be so ignorant of the rules of fair discussion as to suppose that I was logically bound to do any thing more, in the first instance, than *deny* your assertion. The burden of proof (notwithstanding your continual declaration to the contrary) rested with you.

2. But, secondly, it may be thought, perhaps, that although, according to the strict rules of debate, the burden of proof rested upon you, yet, inasmuch as your allegation was a *negative* one, it was hardly consistent with my professed anxiety to come to the main issue for me to stand upon my rights as respondent, and insist on your proving your negative allegation ; but that if I did not admit it, I ought in fairness to waive the technical right and proceed to disprove.

I frankly admit that there are cases in which I should feel disposed to pursue this course. But this is far from being such a case. And why ? Simply because the negative allegation which you call your “first argument,” is tantamount to a *petitio principii*, a mere begging of the very point in question ; for if there be “no warrant from the Word of God for making *any* particular form of polity a condition,” then, of course, exclusive *Episcopacy is unscriptural* ; but this latter is the very point you undertook to demonstrate. You might as well, therefore, not have advanced your “first argument” at all, but have persisted in the course first adopted and so long continued, but which I understood you in your fifth letter to abandon, namely, that of calling upon me to *DISPROVE* the main proposition which you undertook to *PROVE*.

If, therefore, I was justified in declining to disprove this main proposition until you had offered your proofs to sustain it, I should have been equally justified in declining to notice the allegation which you call your “first argument,” any otherwise than by a simple denial of it, since it is only another form of reasserting what you “pledged” yourself in your first letter to prove.

Your first proof, or argument as you term it, and your call upon me to disprove it, are no doubt a very ingenious mode of endeavoring again to accomplish what in the outset you tried and have

constantly been aiming at, that is, to induce me to change places with you. I shall do no such thing. You are affirmant, I respondent. You are bound to prove exclusive Episcopacy, "unscriptural." I am bound to defend it. THIS I DESIRE YOUR READERS NEVER TO FORGET.

There are doubtless inconveniences to yourself in the attempt to prove a negative, as you have undertaken to do. That is not my fault. You should have thought of that before.

3. But, thirdly, I did not insist on holding you to the strict rules of fair debate. I met your allegation with what I consider abundant argument to disprove it. The refutation I employed was partly *ad hominem* (not *ad invidiam*, as by a strange confusion of different things you termed it.) I showed, namely, that whether the *matter* of your first allegation were true or not true, it was not an argument for you to offer; but in addition to this I positively denied, and as I say fully disproved, the matter itself of your allegation. I shall not go over that ground again.

I submit to our readers that I proved, from the authoritative standards of your own Church, as supported by Scripture, and the decision of your General Assembly, that a MINISTRY EXTERNALLY ORDAINED BY ORDAINED MINISTERS IS A DIVINE APPOINTMENT, AND CONSEQUENTLY NECESSARY TO THE CONSTITUTION OF A CHURCH, AND THAT IT IS A SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE.

A word now on the extraordinary notion of ordination put forth in your last letter. Notwithstanding your intimation that you know how to interpret your standards better than I do, I will be bold to affirm that neither the formularies of your Church, nor your accredited writers, teach or countenance any such latitudinarian doctrine. You talk of a man becoming a lawful minister by (1) "strong and pious desires to honor our master in the preaching of the Gospel; (2) requisite endowments, and (3) the invitation of the Church, (embracing the ministry and the people) calling the individual to the exercise of his gifts"!!! I am persuaded that the most learned, sound and accredited living doctors of your Church would scout the idea of any man, whatever his "strong and pious desires" and his "endowments," acquiring any part of his authority as a minister in virtue of an "invitation"! of the "people."—And they will tell you, moreover, that he would have the authority of a minister if ordained by imposition of hands of the "ministry" of the Church, even though he and his ordainers should happen to have erred as to his "strong and pious desires," and even though the "people should never have invited" him "to exercise his gifts."

In my last two letters I pressed upon you a question in regard to ORDINATION, namely: *whether a man can be a lawful minister of Christ unless he has been ordained by imposition of hands by other similarly ordained ministers.*

You say that you have answered it "again and again." I am obliged to reply that, to my apprehension, you have not answered it at all. Excuse me for saying my belief is, that you dare not categorically answer it, yes or no. At all events, I submit it to the judgment of the sound theologians of your own Church, that you have not answered it.

Instead of answering it you have over and over

again confounded it with another question, which I have not yet touched upon. You have confounded ordination with succession, besides totally misapprehending the true notion of succession, as I will at a proper time show. It is enough for me to tell you that ordination and succession, however closely connected, are yet *two* perfectly distinct things, and not to be confounded.

Whether, on the one hand, your instinctive foresight of what I might build upon your admission of my doctrine concerning ordination, (which I contend is also your Church's doctrine,) and on the other hand your dislike of the position as toward your own Church in which you would be placed by an unqualified denial of it, led you to *evade* the point concerning ordination, and confound it in advance with an erroneous notion of succession—this I shall not decide.

That you have confounded ordination and succession I assert, and leave it to your sound theologians to decide between us.

If you had answered my question concerning ordination, the way would have been immediately open to the question concerning succession—a question you most unaccountably imagine I am desirous to avoid. It is the very question I am anxious to reach.

I pressed the point concerning ordination solely to get at the question concerning succession. I assure you there was no design to entrap you—no unworthy artifice in my course. I supposed, and I still suppose, that between a sound Presbyterian and myself there is no difference, either in regard to the necessity for an externally ordained ministry, or in regard to the Apostolical succession of that ministry, but that the doctrine of both our Churches on these two points is *perfectly identical*; that there is no difference in *principle*; and that the sole question between us is—whether the ordaining power is given by Christ to all the Presbyters, or limited to a certain number of chief Presbyters or Bishops.

The correctness of this supposition I also refer to the decision of the intelligent theologians of your own Church.

In conclusion, I simply desire our intelligent and candid readers to judge whether the whole amount of *argument* you have advanced in support of your position, that exclusive Episcopacy is "unscriptural," is any thing more than a solitary *allegation*, unsupported by a single proof from you, and on my part denied and disproved.

Will you now produce *other* proofs for your allegation: or, will you join with me in submitting this which you term your "*first* argument" as sufficiently discussed, and proceed to your *second* argument in proof that my dogma—no Church without a Bishop—is "unscriptural." I submit that one or the other of these things is what the public and myself have a right to expect.

I am, Rev. and Dear Sir, your obedient servant,
February 5th, 1844. JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

LETTER XVIII.

REV. DR. POTTS TO REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT.

It is now perfectly obvious that my opponent does not mean to come to the point, and therefore, the idea of dignifying this correspondence with the title of a *discussion* is worthy of ridicule only—a ridicule in which I am not at all inclined

to share. I should on these accounts feel myself to be perfectly justified in altogether dropping an opponent, who, however valiant at the dinner-table, is like the knight who comes into the lists with a fine flourish of trumpets, and a thundering defiance, as if he would eat up his adversary at a mouthful, but who is always missing when the onset arrives. But although I confess to a strong feeling of disgust, I am unwilling to abandon my object altogether, or even seem to shrink from what I believe to be a public service; more especially as I am sure that I should thereby exceedingly gratify those who do not desire that the un-churching dogma should be exposed to a class of readers who have not heretofore been aware of its character and tendencies. This, however, I am resolved upon, viz: that I will pay no attention to any shifts or dodgings for the future, but pursue the line of argument which I have commenced—with my reader and not my opponent in my eye. I shall therefore say nothing to the prodigious display of *logic* in his last production, but after recapitulating what I have already advanced, and showing its point and bearing, will proceed to other considerations.

Our starting point is the assertion at the dinner table, that *there can be no Church without a Prelate*. I have several times alluded to my reasons for not insisting upon my right to demand of the loud-voiced champion of exclusiveness, that he should begin this discussion, by furnishing proof of this allegation. Every one can see that the pretext that, having advanced a *negative* proposition, he cannot, by the laws of dialectics, be fairly called to prove it, is no more than a pretext under the cover of which he desired to escape from the predicament in which his untimely dinner-speech had placed him. It is a mere pretext, I say, for it requires but a moment's attention from any school-boy, to decide that his assertion contains *two* negatives, which, (the judicious Lindley Murray being judge,) make the strongest kind of affirmative. "There can be no Church *without* a Prelate;" *without* being a negative particle, the assertion amounts to this, *prelacy is indispensable to the existence of the Church of Christ*. Rather than let him escape, I consented to commence the discussion, still holding him to the position which he thrust so vauntingly in the face of the whole community, and believing that I should soon subject him to the necessity of letting the public see upon what Scriptural grounds he meant to justify a doctrine involving such astounding consequences; so contrary to the common sense of mankind, and so contradicted by every-day facts. Hence my first Scriptural argument, now called an assertion, and a begging of the question. That argument is unanswerable, and no wonder it has been unanswered. It is to this effect, that neither the doctrine of Prelacy, nor that of Presbytery, (the one implying superior and inferior grades in the ministerial office, the other the perfect official equality of ministers of the Gospel,) was made, by the word of God, absolutely essential to the existence of the Church. There might be a Church with Prelates, there might be one without them. By this argument I renounced *all* exclusive claims for Presbytery while I denied such claims to Prelacy.

This kind of argument, I have no doubt, took my opponent by surprise, for it would have pleased him better to see the subject presented in the shape of a contest between a member of one sect claiming exclusive authority, and the member of another sect claiming a similar authority; in other words, a debate between a Presbyterian so called and a Prelatist, upon the pitiful question, which of the two was the true Church. But I repeat here what I have often said, (because I wish the reader to bear it in mind,) that I set out with the purpose of exposing *exclusive* claims. I believe that all the substantial elements of Presbyterian government are traceable in the word of God, and farther, that it is best to adhere to them. I have no doubt whatever upon that point; but I would not, therefore, make an adherence to Presbyterianism essential to the existence of the Church of Christ. This is my position, and I believe the position universally held in my own communion. But it is not the position which my opponent desired me to take, if one may judge from his subsequent efforts to deprive me of my catholic character.

I proceeded at once to fortify the above argument by an appeal to the *spirituality* of the Gospel as a moral institute, in contrast with the *formalism* of insisting upon the fundamental necessity of a particular mode of constituting the ministry. I adduced also the true principles of Christian *unity*, showing that it was a unity of faith, love and other *moral* affections, which constitute the Christian character—which affections were not made dependent upon an individual's external relations to one particular Church polity. I still farther corroborated this view by an appeal to glaring facts, proving that *the blessings of God's spirit* have not been confined to any one of the Christian denominations. From this fact I argued that my opponent must find himself in the following dilemma: obliged, on the one hand, to deny the substantial Christianity of all communions but his own—or, by admitting them to be Christian, on the other hand, obliged to admit that the best blessings of the Gospel, its promised *spiritual* blessings, had been bestowed upon bodies which did not belong to the Church of God at all, and which therefore were not in covenant with Him—in other words, that it made very little difference whether men are in or out of '*the Church*.'

Now, without any great pretensions to logic, I take upon me to say that here was something to answer, which has not been answered. We are told that without Prelates there is no Church, and Scripture is referred to as the test. I search the Scripture and reply, I can find no such dogma there, but I find much that looks the other way. What is the answer of my opponent? Why, that my own Church is as exclusive as his. I go out of my way to reply to this, and show that neither in *theory* nor *fact* are we chargeable with any such exclusiveness. I give all manner of illustrations—I answer all manner of questions—and then, to return the compliment, I ask all manner of questions. But in vain; the rejoinder is—*rismus teneatus*—"your Confession of Faith, your General Assembly, your doctrine of predestination," tell a different story. This would be simply amusing, if it did not cost so much good ink, paper, time and eye-sight. Facts are nothing; oh

no, who cares for facts? Analogies between the Church and the State are nothing; who cares for analogies? Answers to questions are nothing, because they go beyond a mere *yes* and *no*. Nothing, in short, is argument, which does not suit my opponent. This is significant, and I have reason to know is thoroughly appreciated by the great mass of our readers.

What would he have? Should he take it upon him to affirm that there can be no state without a king, and profess his willingness to test the affirmation by an appeal to the Federal Constitution; the burden of proof certainly lies upon him to show *how* and *where* that instrument countenances any such assertion. My denial that the Federal Constitution teaches such a doctrine is not to be met by another assertion, that the denial is a mere unsupported allegation, a begging of the question, &c. Alas! for logic! One can hardly imagine how any one, even though he were a professor of moral philosophy or logic, could have constructed such a happy piece of argument as that which occupies my opponent's last article. It is a novel mode of playing the part of *respondent*, the title in which he rejoices, and which (*respondens a non respondendo*) he seems to consider as investing him with the privilege of not responding at all. Instead of the hard work of answering questions or arguments, he prefers to throw out—like tubs to a whale—the Confession of Faith, predestination, sixty thousand excommunicated Presbyterians, &c., in hope that he may distract attention from the main issue. The reader understood all these things, and considers them as signals of distress from a vessel on a lee shore. Enough of them. I shall notice hereafter nothing but argument.

In support of the position advanced in my fifth letter I pursued briefly, in my last, an analogy between the State and the Church, and showed conclusively (so conclusively as to have placed it beyond my opponent's power of reply, for he does not notice it all), that even admitting, for the sake of argument, that Prelacy is recognized in Scripture as the then existing model of Church order, it is not more distinctly recognized than monarchy. And yet that no one in this land will affirm that our rejection of the latter was against the will of God, in such a sense as to destroy the State. In other words, that even supposing we may have erred (as I am told a few *highly conservative*, strong government people among us do,) in casting off the kingly polity, we are, nevertheless, a *bona fide* state. If this be so, (as all will admit) I asked whether a similar error in respect to Prelacy (supposing it to have been even half as explicitly recognized in Scripture as monarchy is) must necessarily be a fundamental error, which puts the mistaking persons completely beyond the pale of the Christian Church. The force of this illustration of the gross absurdity of the High Church exclusiveness consists in this, that such exclusiveness makes an error as to *form*, as fatal as an error in regard to *substance*; that it puts upon a par, the accidents and the essence; that it confounds government with the functionalities of government. No Church without a Prelate can be maintained only by a course of reasoning which will establish the corresponding doctrine, No State without a King.

But the main thought is, that this analogy destroys the doctrine of a *necessary succession of individuals*. For, as that succession in the state was broken up entirely by our revolution, and yet the country was left with a better government than when it was ruled by a hereditary monarch, so may a succession in the Church be broken up, with advantage to the Church. But this my opponent denies. He affirms that an unbroken series of ordinations to the ministry is the very basis of the Church. It is, therefore, the turning point of the whole argument. I have again and again admitted that there have been cases, and may be again, in which the regular method of transmitting the ministerial character might be interrupted, and yet a true Church be preserved and a true ministry raised up, and subsequently transmitted by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. The reader who wishes to see this subject fully discussed, may turn to Claude's well-known defence of the Reformation. As, therefore, any such interruption in the series of ordinations would—according to the doctrine of my opponent—utterly vitiate all subsequent acts, I have considered the questions of an unbroken series of ordinations and an unbroken succession, as really identical, although (strangely enough, considering his claims to "moral fairness and logical accuracy"), he denies this identity. He gives no reason, however, and I shall therefore consider them as virtually one, and proceed now with the train of remark suggested by the above parallel between the Church and the State.

My object now will be to investigate the proofs which are advanced in support of the absurd fancy of an Apostolical succession, as necessary to the existence of the Church. It will be found to be a new version of an old fable—the world resting upon the back of the elephant, the elephant upon a tortoise, the tortoise upon—nothing. The Church resting upon Prelates, the Prelates upon an unbroken descent from the Apostles, their predecessors, and this unbroken descent resting upon—nothing.

The theory is this: our modern Prelates are the lineal successors of the twelve Apostles; to them the Apostolic power has descended, (how much they can show of this power we shall see presently,) they only can appoint a ministry, which ministry alone has the promise of blessing, and can rightfully take care of the fold of Christ, as pastors; they only can confer regeneration in baptism, and they only (as one of them said) have the body and blood of Christ to give to his people. (See these claims as taught by Palmer, vol. II., part 6.) These are astonishing powers, as every reader can see, and no wonder that they have a strong attraction for certain classes of minds, both among priests and people. No wonder that many of the former are anxious to persuade the latter that they are invested with a sort of vicegerency from Heaven, which really places the Church and the world pretty much at their mercy. But upon this point we shall have more to say at another time. Such substantially is the claim, and such the ground (*viz.*: a succession to the Apostolic office,) upon which the claim is built. "There is not a Bishop, priest or deacon among us," says Dr. Hook, "who cannot, if he please,

trace his own spiritual descent from St. Peter or St. Paul."

Now, as my opponent seems quite unwilling to give us arguments (perhaps because they are not as 'plenty as blackberries,') I must resort to other advocates of this doctrine of the necessity of unbroken descent from the Apostles, to discover the basis of this futile theory, out of which such absolutely fearful consequences are made to grow.

The theory is built upon two assumptions. 1. That modern Prelates are the descendants of the Apostles. 2. That their lineage is and must be unbroken, from the days of St. Peter and St. Paul. 1. *That modern Prelates are the successors of the Apostles.* What Scripture (for to that lies the appeal) can be shown for such an assumption? Especially is there any Scripture so absolutely demonstrative as to silence all doubt upon a point which is made by my opponent an article of faith—an *essential* item in the creed of the Church of Christ? an element, wanting which, the Church is defunct, and cannot be restored without a miracle?

The reader will smile at the magnificence of the edifice as contrasted with the narrowness of the foundation. A volume might be written in exposure of this claim, but I must be content with a few condensed paragraphs.

Christ ordained the Apostles, as chief ministers—Prelates are the only chief ministers of Christ in succeeding times—ergo, Prelates are the direct descendants of the Apostles. This is the reasoning. To make it good, it must be shown that Prelates have inherited *the character and power with which the Apostles were expressly invested; that their relations to the Church are the same.* Let us test the matter by a question or two. (1) The Apostles were the inspired teachers of the world; but what evidence of inspiration (short of loud claims of infallibility or 'indefectibility')—do the Prelates of Rome, England or America give? Again: (2) The Apostles were empowered to communicate miraculous gifts, (see Mark XVI. 17, 18) gifts of healing, the power of speaking with unknown tongues, &c.; but what Prelate (with the exception of a few highly-favored individuals in the Papal body, who have appealed to "lying wonders" wrought by them) can tell of a disease cured, sight restored, a fractured limb healed, or a discourse in an unknown tongue delivered by any of those upon whom they have laid their hands. Again: (3) The Apostles wrought miracles themselves; they could drink any deadly thing without harm, &c. &c.; but what Prelate would be hardy enough to try the experiment upon himself, of taking a dose of poison? Prussic acid would be, I doubt not, as fatal to Dr. Doane as to Dr. Wainwright. Again: (4) The Apostles were the overseers of the whole Church, having received plenary powers to preach, baptize, bestow miraculous gifts, ordain, and direct ordination, not for a limited district or diocese, but for the known world; but what modern Prelate has ventured to claim such an extensive jurisdiction, if we except the Prelates of Rome, who alone, in this particular, claim their full inheritance of the Apostolic character? Again, (5) the Apostles were *especially* set apart as living witnesses of the resurrection; they were par-

ticularly characterized by the fact that they had *seen the Lord.* This can be shown, by a dozen references to Scripture, to have been one of the marked peculiarities and duties of their office. But what modern Prelate can in this, any more than in miraculous endowments, establish his claim to "the signs of an Apostle?"

These common sense contrasts establish the absurdity of resting the claims of any ministry whatever upon the assertion of its inheritance of the Apostolic authority. *The apostles had no successors*, except as they were Christian men, and ministers of the word. They organized Churches of Christ wherever they went; they established a ministry; and whether that ministry consisted of three orders or only one, (which is a distinct question,) it was assuredly not the depository of Apostolic powers.

But this is not all: before we consent to acknowledge our modern Prelates, or presbyters, as the lineal descendants of these legates of Heaven, we must have some explicit Scripture to prove their claim. I say again, *explicit*, for nothing but proof positive can justify such a claim. If it be not an undoubted claim, it deserves no better name than absurd arrogance.

And what Scriptures, reader, do you suppose are referred to by our Apostolical successionists? These are the best they have—"Lo, I am with you *always, even unto the end of the world.*" Answer—Does Christ then restrict this promise to the Apostles, and prelates their successors? Is he pledged to *be with* no other? Are other Christian teachers to have no share in the promise? Again "*as my father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" Answer—Does this *sending* imply the necessity of a lineal succession? And has he sent none but Prelates? And are Prelates sent in the same sense as Christ sent the Apostles? Again, "I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father hath appointed unto me." Answer—Such a place and authority in the kingdom of Heaven, the Church, was bestowed upon the Apostles alone, as the inspired and miraculously endowed lawgivers of his Church, in which respect alone could they be said to be placed "upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Now, I ask, does it not require all the gravity which a grave subject demands to prevent one's lifting the lash of ridicule against such pretensions, supported by such appeals to the word of God?

Finally, upon this point, let us remark that the paucity of *Scriptural arguments* is fully admitted by the staunchest advocates of this mysterious Apostolical succession. I will let some of these gentlemen give us a specimen or two of *their* views of the Scriptural argument for the doctrine "no Church without Prelates," or as it ought to read, "without Apostles."

Thus Mr. Keble (on Tradition, p. 96) says, "The succession itself is—"A mystery, and of course left, as all mysteries are, in some respects dimly revealed, i. e. in the world's language, vague and "indistinct." He argues that tradition alone can prove the doctrine.

In Tract No. 86, the writer says of these doctrines, "if the Episcopal and priestly succession have in them something divine, as channels which convey, as it were, his presence to us—we must

expect to find in them something that hideth itself—surrounded with difficulties to the carnal mind, withdrawing itself, &c.”

In Tract No. 8, the writer says, “there is no part of the ecclesiastical system which is not faintly traced in Scripture, and no part which is much more than faintly traced.”

By another of these writers, “it is granted that the divine right of Episcopacy, the Apostolical succession, the power of the Church, &c. are wanting in direct or satisfactory proof, and are to be established, if at all, only by the aid of very attenuated and nicely managed inferential arguments.” “Every one must allow that there is next to nothing on the surface of Scripture about them, and very little, even under the surface, of a satisfactory character,” &c.

I need quote no more. Let it be remarked that these are admissions made by men who rely mainly upon *tradition*, but who would gladly have seized upon Scripture arguments, if they could have come at them.

What, then, shall we say to a dogma whose buttresses are so rotten? What is the worth of a pedigree, the proofs of which are so “attenuated?” Who can fail to admire the infinite self-complacency with which its claimants are so full that they fear not to walk abroad, even in daylight, Apostolically linked arm in arm, and crowding men as good as themselves off the foot-path into the kennel?

In my next, I shall consider the assumption upon which the dogma of unbroken succession rests—after which I will proceed to farther scriptural objections to the unchurching monopoly.

FEBRUARY 8, 1844.

GEORGE POTTS.

LETTER XIX.

REV. DR. WAINWRIGHT TO REV. DR. POTTS.

Rev. and Dear Sir—You have uncereemoniously sounded a retreat from the field to which you as uncereemoniously challenged me, but I cannot permit you to escape without a word or two at parting.

With what good reason you first gave and then persisted in the challenge, with what temper you have thus far carried on the controversy, and with what courtesy you now retire from it, I leave others to judge. As I will not presume, myself, to decide upon the propriety of the step you have now taken, as between gentlemen, to say nothing of its aspect as between ministers of the Gospel, so neither do I feel disposed to question its prudence.

After having made a bold affirmation, and in the progress of *eight* letters, of no very moderate length, advanced *one solitary* argument in its support, upon being called upon to substantiate that argument when invalidated, or to bring forward a *second*, not feeling disposed or prepared to pursue either course, it was perhaps wise in you to throw up the discussion altogether.

You say that you do not make “any pretensions to logic.” I do not know that any man is under a moral obligation to understand the art of reasoning, or to be versed in the common and well defined rules of debate. But perhaps it may not be amiss to suggest that, in such an instance, it would be expedient for the

individual, whosoever he might be, not to thrust himself into positions where the observance of these rules is fairly imposed upon him.

The assertion you have made, that you have “answered all manner of questions,” is, I think, somewhat venturesome. I do not remember to have asked more than *one* question touching closely the point in dispute, but that is a vital one, for the categorical answer to it involves a principle which lies at the foundation of the whole debate. It has not been answered plainly and manfully, and your abrupt termination of this discussion sustains me in the belief I expressed in my last letter, that you dare not answer it in a straight-forward manner, yes or no.

Not being able or willing to answer it, and not having the frankness to say so, and to leave it, and proceed with a *second* argument, I do not see what course was left for you to pursue other than the one you have adopted. Having now withdrawn from the attitude of a disputant, you have of course relieved yourself from the responsibilities of one; and you can henceforth manage your arguments, assertions and analogies as you please, and thus save yourself the trouble of defending hasty and unfortunate premises and illogical inferences. I also shall find my advantage in the arrangement, for I can now go forward and vindicate my doctrine without the annoyance of repeated and unsuccessful attempts to bring my adversary to the point and keep him there.

When I express to you my disappointment in not having found in you such an adversary as I flattered myself I was to be honored with, upon accepting your challenge to a discussion, I would not have you or our readers imagine that there is any regret mingled with this feeling, at the question itself having been brought into such prominent notice. On the contrary, I rejoice much at the deep interest that has been excited in relation to it, and at the prospect there is of its now obtaining a thorough investigation by some means or other. It can still be fully and fairly examined without a formal disputation, and I am confident the result will be that much ignorance and prejudice in regard to the opinions held by Churchmen will be thereby removed.

To be sure, a public discussion, conducted in an honorable and dignified manner, with a mutual avoidance of uncourteous and unkind expressions, and appeals to mere popular prejudice, would have produced no unpleasant excitement, and would have added no little interest to the whole investigation. As it is, however, (let the blame rest where it may) it has been clearly proved that we had better each proceed after his own method, to establish our respective doctrines, and then leave the public to judge of the comparative weight of our arguments.

I was very unwilling to commence this discussion, as is well known, and I cannot say that I regret being relieved from the necessity of following it up with an adversary, in debating with whom I had begun to feel that neither the cause of truth nor that of charity could be much advanced; but I should be far more unwilling to leave the question in its present unsatisfactory position. And therefore I shall not consent to do so.

You indeed have deserted the arena; but as

trust that I should not have exulted over a prostrate foe, had it been my fortune to vanquish you in a fair-fought field, I feel no disposition to triumph in your precipitate retreat, and, therefore I shall say no more, but proceed as I best can without you.

With my parting salutation to you as you go, however, suffer me to unite a word of friendly caution. You have tried your powers in controversy, and are now about to change this mode of discussion for one which, I doubt not, will occasion you less perplexity and discomfort. I trust that the altered character of your communications to the public will enable you, in your preparations, to reflect more seriously than I fear you have heretofore done, in the excitement of debate, upon the sacredness of the question under consideration.

When one has a present adversary to contend with, it is not perhaps in human nature always to distinguish between zeal for the truth and ambition for conquest, and therefore it has often happened, unfortunately for the reputation of our common Christianity, that religious controversy has been marked by a levity of manner, and a contumelious use of language, which have been in reality aimed not so much at the subject in dispute as at the person of the disputant. Now, however, that you have withdrawn yourself from the influence of this temptation, I trust that the Church of which I am an humble member, and the doctrine which, as I believe, sustains her distinctive character, will be regarded by you as invested with some degree of sacredness, and therefore that you will not allow yourself to assail them any more with opprobrious epithets or expressions of ridicule.

Remember that your own Church and the doctrines which command your firm belief are exposed to the same description of unworthy attack from the ranks of infidelity. In the estimation of the unbeliever you are as "arrogant," as "exclusive," as "uncharitable" toward him, as you can possibly suppose Churchmen to be toward you. But does this justly subject you to such denunciations? Certainly not. And wherefore? Because you conscientiously believe that the doctrines you hold are the revealed truths of God—you cannot alter their exclusive character, and if you hold them in the spirit of love, you do not

feel that you are obnoxious to the charge of want of charity.

Why, then, not mete out to us the same measure of forbearance that you yourself feel entitled to from others? I believe the doctrine I hold, in relation to the essential constitution of the Church, to be as surely founded on the Word of God, as we both do the doctrine of human depravity, or the atonement, or the Trinity, and to be as fairly deduced from this Word. I do not hold it, as you assert, to be a question of *form*, but one of *substance*. Now this may be the error of those who are called High Churchmen. Convict them of error, if you can, from the ultimate authority we both appeal to. But in doing so pray remember that they have as deep an interest in discovering God's truth as yourself, that they have perhaps sought for it as diligently, and that they hold what they have obtained as conscientiously.

While then you bend your efforts to instruct the ignorance or remove the prejudice of the body whom you designate as a "comparatively contracted denomination," but whose insignificance has nevertheless not shielded them from your assault, reflect that you are dealing with doctrines as sacred in their estimation and as dear to their affections as any Gospel truth can be to you.

In conclusion, suffer me to direct your attention to a sentiment of Richard Baxter, who, in the earlier part of his ministry, was as bitter in his hatred and as violent in his denunciations of Episcopacy as many of those in the present day with whom he is held in high estimation, but who, when age had made him wiser, and experience had enlarged the bounds of his charity, uttered and left on record the following memorable words:—

"AT FIRST IT WOULD DISGRACE ANY DOCTRINE WITH ME IF I DID BUT HEAR IT CALLED POPERY AND ANTI-CHRISTIAN; BUT I HAVE LONG LEARNED TO BE MORE IMPARTIAL, AND TO KNOW THAT SATAN CAN USE EVEN THE NAMES OF POPERY AND ANTI-CHRIST, TO BRING TRUTH INTO SUSPICION AND DISCREDIT."

I bid you now a final farewell, and am, with all due respect,

Your obedient servant,

JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT.

SATURDAY, Feb. 10, 1844.

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